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OIC MAJESTY
or
THE KNIGHTS OF THE FLEECE



WILLIAM AUGUSTUS SMITH

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"MOTHER!" CRIED COLUMBIASON.

HIS PSEUDOIC MAJESTY

OR

THE KNIGHTS OF THE FLEECE

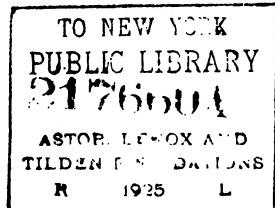
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BY

WILLIAM AUGUSTUS SMITH

ILLUSTRATED BY A. WEST
FROM ORIGINAL DRAWINGS BY THE AUTHOR

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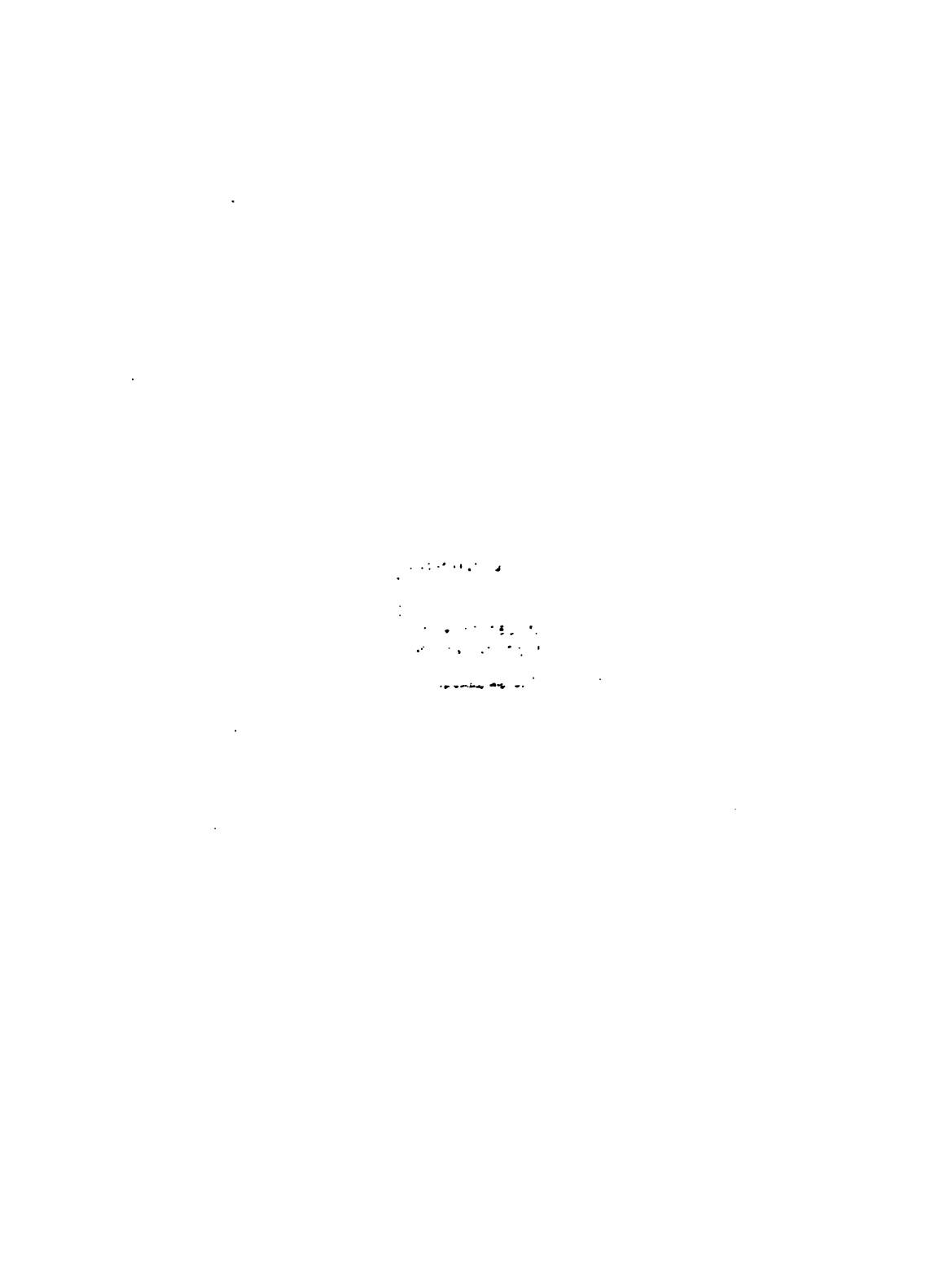
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PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

I have observed that in most pioneer organizations, of whatever nature, a feeling of fellowship exists; but with the increase in numbers and wealth come the spirit of caste and the worshipful adoration of gold, imparting to the "caste-bound" and to the gold idolaters a self-importance so seemingly great as to obscure in them the vision to nobler and higher purposes in life than the pride of self and the worship of fleeting possessions.

My mind is carried back to the early days of our great republic—back to its struggles, even before it assumed free governmental form—and I behold a tie of fellowship, uniting all in a common cause—the cause of freedom! The "Liberty Cap" could then be worn by all alike as a symbol of freedom, unity, fellowship and love of country.

To-day I behold, with sorrow, many of the sons and daughters of the republic caste-bound, displaying, with pride, their "family" coats-of-arms and boasting of their ancient ancestry, which seems, much more than the love of coun-

try, to absorb their attention. I also behold many of the daughters of the republic seeking foreign title through marriage with impecunious and, not infrequently, imbecile, titled foreigners, as if to show to the world their disdain of the country that gave them birth; and I behold its sons bowing before golden idols and monopolizing the various industries of the country, to the great detriment of their fellow-countrymen, the producers, to whom the republic owes its life to-day.

My book, which is allegorical, is based on this state of facts, and although the ridiculous has, on some occasions, been made absurdly ludicrous, I trust the book will inspire its readers with a love for the sublime principles which inspired our fore-fathers in the great work which laid the foundation for our happiness.

THE AUTHOR.

HIS PSEUDOIC MAJESTY

CHAPTER I

THE TITULAR INTRUSION

It was about the year nineteen hundred and—never mind the exact time; a few years more or less are of little moment in the record of great events. Suffice it to say that Columbiason stood on the bank of one of the most charmingly beautiful little lakes in the world—a perfect mirror, framed by a park equally beautiful, with its almost endless variety of scenery of indescribable splendor, comprising cascades falling thousands of feet as they trembled in the breeze like delicate silvery ribbons, cathedral-like rocks rising in majestic beauty to the clouds—natural obelisks and spires and domes appearing here and there—noble oaks towering to the skies; broad, grassy fields and pine-covered hills; stretches of rosebeds laid

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out in the most artistic manner, with blooming roses, flowers and plants of every description and of every color of the rainbow, the whole scene rendered more resplendent by the rays of the sun, which had risen in golden hue from behind the verdure-covered hills and great mountain peaks.

There he stood, contemplating the beauties and attractions of the magnificent scene, and reflecting upon the fact that all within the range of his eye, and indeed much more, belonged to him. As he turned his eyes from scene to scene, they finally fell upon the magnificent little lake in front of him and beheld his stately form, mirrored as perfectly as if he had stood before a mirror of most polished glass, and perfectly revealing the contour and features of his handsome face, which had grown more handsome from the years of experience and the consequent wise appearance which that experience appeared to convey.

As Columbiason looked into his own eyes, his attention was turned from his possessions and the entrancing scenery around him to himself, as the son of Columbia,

who, as our readers doubtless know, was much admired and beloved by the Goddess of Liberty for her sterling qualities and devotion to the cause of freedom—a mother who had carefully nurtured her boy and beheld him grow to manhood's estate and develop, under the wisdom of the ages, to a state of perfection surpassing the highest expectations of his comrades and schoolfellows. No wonder Columbian reflected upon his accomplishments, his stature and the still wonderful possibilities open to him; no wonder, as he beheld his own form so perfectly reflected in the mirror lake, he dwelt upon his many deeds of virtue, wisdom, mercy and justice, which deeds, although not reflected in the lake, had reflected themselves upon the ocean of truth and justice, upon which, but for such reflection, many a bark of freedom now successfully launched would have been dashed to pieces, through false allurement of monarchical beacon-lights, upon the muddy flats of antiquity. He had little if anything to criticise in himself, nor any occasion to regret his past life. His thoughts and actions had, he felt, been only for the

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general good; his possessions had been acquired honestly, and he could truthfully say that he owed no man a dollar. In fact, Columbiason was pretty well satisfied with himself, and the feeling seemed to take possession of him that he had nothing more to do but to rest in the positive assurance that he had properly served his mission thus far, and had only to continue in well-doing until called to leave all to his beneficiaries.

Thus contented with himself, the son of Columbia was about to withdraw his eyes from the reflected object of his meditations when, to his great astonishment, there appeared beside his image on the lake another figure in the form of a youth, gorgeously attired in the armor of a knight of old. On the head of the knight was a helmet, with the visor turned up, displaying a face smooth and beautiful to behold, with features clean cut, but somewhat weak, and eyes which, from his slight information about ancient knighthood, Columbiason imagined must be blue. The knight had long, curly hair, which, from his similarly slight information, Columbiason imagined to be light in color and as beauti-

ful as the hair of a fairy queen. By the side of the knight hung a sword, like that which usually completed the make-up of an ancient knight. Indeed, his figure was quite attractive and fascinating to Columbiason, who gazed at it in the greatest bewilderment, and to whom it appeared even more real than his own reflection, which its owner caused to remain stationary, while the reflection of the knight appeared to move with a grace and ease which showed an apparent training in posing and gesture, calculated to inspire the beholder with the importance of those features as a first principle of knighthood's requirements.

Finally the knight, in a manner dignified and commanding, folded his arms, and a voice somewhat effeminate but perfectly articulated, was heard to exclaim: "Columbiason, hear me! Thou hast been gazing upon thine own reflection and dwelling upon thy past virtues and accomplishments, satisfied with thyself and contented, no doubt, in the contemplation of thine acquirements as the son of Columbia! Little dost thou dream of the wonderful possibilities in the realm of antiquity

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which await thine activities! That thou hast acquired wealth, 'tis true; but wealth can be squandered and forgotten with the father of it! That thou hast many virtues is equally true; but even they may be forgotten by thy posterity! Strange it is, thou son of Columbia, that, with all thy careful rearing, thou shouldst even have passed the age of youth without a knowledge of thy rights as the worthy posterity of worthy ancestry! I wonder not that, with the lack of such knowledge, thou shouldst be content in the assurance that thou hast fully performed thy duty; but tell me, pray, where is the armorial ensign of thine ancestors? Knowest thou not that long after thy wealth has been squandered and thy virtues forgotten, this would be cherished by thy posterity? Yet I behold it not amongst thy possessions."

"But, sir knight, I have no ancestors!" ejaculated Columbiason, in a spirit of vexatious awe.

"Thou sayest truly, for thine ancestors are dead," replied the knight; "but," he continued, "thou canst search amongst the dead ashes of the past and resurrect

them, in the minds of thy posterity, who will behold in them the greatness of Columbiason!"

"What have I to do with mine ancestor? He has done naught for me!" responded Columbiason.

"True; but he should do much. Thou shouldst bring him forth and make him work. He will be faithful to thee, even when thou sleepest," replied the knight.

The son of Columbia, becoming more and more bewildered, stared more intently at the knight's reflection; then raising his right arm, he inquired, in a tone of voice sonorous and commanding: "Who art thou, knight, and whence comest thou?"

"I am a messenger from King Pseudo, by whom I am sent to enlighten thee on thy possibilities as the salt of the earth. My name is 'Title'! Thou seest in this beautiful lake my reflection, but thou must look for me in the air. Adieu!" replied the knight, as his reflection disappeared from the lake and from view of Columbiason, who stood for a moment awe-stricken at what he had seen and heard.

On regaining himself, Columbiason looked in every direction for the vanished

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knight, whom he failed to discover. At last he sat down on one of nature's rocky sofas, of which the beautiful park contained a great variety, and meditated on the words which the knight had spoken; then he said to himself, "I fear me this knight hath turned mine head! Mine ancestors are dead, yet must I make them live? My wealth may be squandered and my virtues forgotten, yet mine armorial ensigns will live forever and reflect my greatness to my posterity. Thus are the dead of more value than the living! O knight! thou almost persuadest me to die that I may live! Thou wouldest send me to the age of antiquity to delve amongst the ashes of the past! Ha! Ha! Already do I find myself conversing in the language of the dead! And to think that I have an ancestor—reflected from the dying embers of the ashes of antiquity! A dim reflection, surely, but he must be there, for the knight hath so said. Why should I longer remain plain Columbiason? Where, where are the ashes of my fathers?"

So saying, the son of Columbia arose from his rocky seat and gazed for a moment into the lake; then he fell back again into

the seat and was soon in an unconscious sleep, in which condition he remained for about an hour. When he awoke, he looked around in a half dazed condition, as if awakening from a dream; then he arose, placed his hands behind his back, and strolled leisurely, in a meditative mood, in the direction of his mansion, his head bowed and his eyes fixed upon the ground; nor did he raise his eyes until he arrived at the massive doors leading to the main corridor of the palace, and only then to enable him to touch the button connecting with an electric bell. In response to the touch of the button the great doors swung inward on their heavy hinges, and the son of Columbia entered his palatial home a different man—changed by the alluring temptations suggested by the mythy knight.

CHAPTER II

THE ANGLOPHOBIC SPARK

The discovery of the fact of a possible ancient ancestor, through the revelation of the ancient knight, appeared to have made a deep impression upon Columbiason, of which he could not rid himself; namely, that he had discovered his greatness. How should he proceed to dignify the discovery? was the next question. For a discovery kept solely within the knowledge of the discoverer would lose its value, or rather, it would be without value, and the discoverer would be devoid of prestige. This would never do. He must get possession of the ashes of his ancestors by whatever means. Just how to accomplish this was a problem apparently difficult of solution by the son of Columbia. The first thing to do was to locate them, and the next thing to be accomplished was the excavating process.

That Columbiason had an ancestor there was no doubt; for the knight, as he had before reminded himself, had told him so; and to be the happy progenitor or source of the ashes, his ancestor must have been cremated, and if cremated, the posterity must go back to the ancient days of the funeral pyre—back, back into antiquity—to obtain his ashes. This Columbiason knew must be a long journey, and he was at his wit's end to know how to proceed, when he chanced to hear of a certain heraldic college, which guaranteed to obtain coats-of-arms and various armorial ensigns without publicity. This he looked upon as a fortunate coincidence. To think that just as he was in need of counsel, a heraldic college should come to his relief and even offer to obtain the important ancestral necessities without publicity—a guarantee of so much moment at that particular time; for to publish to the world his ancestral proclivities before even the location of the much desired ashes, might lay him open to equally prompt ridicule and unpleasant criticism, thus placing obstacles in the way of his search.

Thus meditating and arguing with him-

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self, Columbiason concluded to communicate with the said college without delay. He therefore, lost no time in informing its faculty of his desire, in an apologetic epistle, in which he regretted that he had not been made aware until recently, of the existence of an ancient ancestor and that that individual was etherealized so long ago as to make a search for his ashes necessarily troublesome and tedious. He took occasion to state, however, that money was no object to him, and if the records of the college did not go back far enough to disclose the location of the ashes of his ancient ancestor, the faculty need not hesitate to proceed with the search beyond the recorded data, as the further they would be obliged to extend their search into antiquity the better pleased he would be, provided his ancestor's ashes and the customs prevailing at the time of the demise of their owner, were kept within the realm of the British Isles, for which, he said, he had formed a great liking.

It might well be imagined that in due course of time Columbiason received an answer to his communication to the her-

aldic college. In this answer, he was informed that his ancient ancestor had been traced to a funeral pyre at what was known as "Spurn Head," located at the mouth of the river "Humber" where it empties into the North Sea, in the County of York, England, and that he could take his own time in locating the much desired ashes. A diagram of a coat-of-arms, to which Columbiason was presumably entitled, was enclosed in the answer, in which he was advised that diligent search through the records, covering the various countries of the earth's surface (except, of course, his own country, which did not interest him), had failed to disclose the name "Columbiason;" that the nearest approach to that name was "Columbidæ,"* which, it might be perceived, carried the letters as far as "bi," and then, instead of ending in "ason," the letters "dae" were added; but he was assured beyond a doubt that the genus "Columba" was the out-growth of the "Columbidæ," ranked among the "Gallinaceous,"† but exhibiting points of resemblance to the order "In-

*A family of dove or pigeon.

†An order of bird.

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sessores,"* which had been constituted into a distinct order, and that the enclosed diagram or design was entirely accurate as a representation of the family for which it was intended.

Columbiason was overjoyed when he read the reply from the heraldic college to his solicitous inquiries for ancient ancestral honors. And particularly pleased was he to note that his ancestors were ranked among the "Gallinaceous" and exhibited points of resemblance to the order of "Insessores," but what pleased him most of all was that they were a distinct order—distinction being his greatest object.

When Columbiason examined the enclosed design, however, he appeared to manifest some disappointment. It was nothing but the picture of a little bird, resembling a dove, perched on a single straw. For a moment this shook his confidence in his ancestors. How anybody belonging to a distinct order, like the "Insessores," could put a little bird on a straw and call it a coat-of-arms or an armorial ensign, was more than he could

*Birds having feet suitable for perching.

understand. He had expected something more robust from the ancients; and if he was to have a bird, that bird should, he felt, be a large one and one to his own liking. The design was, therefore, redrawn in his own country, and when the new drawing was returned to him, it represented an eagle sitting on the limb of a tree.

Columbiason, at first, eyed the design with some degree of satisfaction, but on due inspection and after some deliberation, he concluded that the bird looked too much like the American eagle; and such an emblem could not be considered for a moment. Everybody knew that the American eagle was comparatively a recent discovery, and he had convinced himself that antiquity should figure above all else in a design for a coat-of-arms for the House of Columbiason. Then, too, so long as the design had to be changed, why not have it made to suit himself? He had every assurance in his own mind that "Columbidæ" was English; and that his descent was lineal and direct the heraldic college would no doubt verify, even if the design which it had forwarded

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to him was not ample verification of that fact.

Now, Columbiason knew that the lion figured very conspicuously among the animals and birds borne in coat-armor, and he had been credibly informed that, even as early as the twelfth century, the king of beasts was assumed as an appropriate emblem by the sovereigns of England. That was proof sufficient that the English lion was much more ancient than the American eagle; and, while Columbiason did not care particularly for the whole lion, he could not understand why the bird should not be made to perch on the lion's head instead of on a straw or on the limb of a tree; then, if the bird should not be exactly English, the lion's head would certainly be recognized everywhere as a British emblem.

The more Columbiason thought the matter over the more the propriety of the change in the design appealed to his mind; and in due time, the reconstruction of the design was effected and the Columbiason coat-of-arms, in the nature of a goose perched upon a lion's head, was conspicuously displayed on nearly all of his be-

longings. This gave rise to a vulgar insinuation on the part of the enemies of the son of Columbia (for he, of course, had some enemies), that the lion's head represented the British Empire and the goose represented the son of Columbia; but such undignified insinuations were too much beneath the notice of the proprietor of the unique emblem to disturb his equilibrium. On the contrary, these aspersions seemed only to strengthen him in his own estimation, as well as to lessen his maligners in the same opinion; for he felt that, did he not amount to something, he would not be the subject of notice, much less of criticism. He, therefore, continued to grow more popular with himself, and to desire to force this popularity upon those whose appreciation of ancestral honors was as dull as their antipathy to antiquated titles was keen.

But, although Columbiason had obtained some trace of his ancient ancestry and had completed his design for a coat-of-arms, consistent, as he believed, with the discovery, he was still Columbiason; and everybody knew it. Of what good was his ancient ancestry, of what

good his armorial ensigns, if he could not get out of himself? In other words, if he could not obtain recognition, apart from himself, as the reflector of such ancestral and armorial refulgence. So long as he remained a plain American, neither his ancestry nor his ancient coat-of-arms, however modernized, would elevate him in the mind of his countrymen. No, he must stand apart from them; he must be superior to them—he must live more in the past, or, more properly speaking, in the age of antiquity. His ancestors were English and his subordinates and servants must also be English. His yachts must be manned by English crews and his household must be able to recognize the lion's head as the superior emblem even of the goose. This would be a good beginning.

Arguing thus with himself, Columbia-son made up his mind as to the proper course to pursue; and it was not long before all of his servants were substituted by British subjects, and the ways and manners of the English nobility lent a particular and fascinating charm to him, resulting in his constant affiliation with

those titled celebrities of "high degree," thus gradually lifting him out of himself as Columbiason, to himself as the posterity of ancient and antiquated ancestry, whose importance began more vigorously to manifest itself to his consciousness.

Everything was English now, from his ancestry up, and why should he not find favor with the King and receive a title becoming the ancestry of whose coat-of-arms he was the worthy inheritor? A great idea! He would cultivate the King's acquaintance. In the mean time he would consider what degree of title would best serve his laudable ambitions and enable him to maintain the dignity of his ancestors, so that he could find favor with the world and with himself as a creditable posterity.

Another question, rather vexatious than otherwise, soon arose in the mind of Columbiason. He had not had time to ponder over the uses to which an ancient coat-of-arms could be put, or rather should be put in his country. He had certain sensibilities which he did not deem it advisable to shock by a display of any lack of knowledge on a matter so im-

portant. Then, too, it appeared to him that there were others who had sensibilities in that direction, and it occurred to him that the uses of such a coat-of-arms should be made known to them gradually, lest the effect of too sudden a contrast with it might be of a dazzling nature and create unpleasant conditions. He had also, whether properly or improperly, always entertained a sort of feeling that everybody in the land was on an equality with everybody else. How could he consistently place himself on a pinnacle of superiority now without appearing in the guise of a hypocrite? Why had his superiority been kept from him all these years? Then, too, if he displayed a coat-of-arms so different in design from what to his friends might be considered appropriate and appear as a person of superior distinction, an explanation as to the cause of so sudden a change of position would be incumbent upon him; and how could he overcome the embarrassment which he would feel while unbosoming the secret of his supereminence? Yet to be great only to one's self is conceit; on the other hand, to apprise one's friends of

one's superiority would be to inform them of their own inferiority, and this would be equally embarrassing to all concerned.

Thus Columbiason argued with himself as he paced to and fro along the magnificent corridors of his more than magnificent palace, in an attitude of consequential puffiness, as it were, and felt more and more his greatness coming over him. Finally, he arrived at the conclusion that he might permit it to become known to his friends that his friendly feelings had in no wise become lessened by the knowledge of his fitness to fill the shoes of his ancient ancestors and the consequent exhibition of the armorial ensigns to which those antiquated relatives were unconscious contributors; but in so doing, he could not help feeling that this knowledge might lead to a sort of altitudinarianism, bordering possibly on the majestic, that would naturally warrant a more ostentatious display of magnificence than had formerly been his habit. He hoped, of course, that they would appreciate this little difference between them and himself and bear with fortitude any possible disappointment they might feel at any

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inability on their part to ascend to the state of transcendental superlativeness in which he had found himself through the disclosure of the ancient knight.

After arriving at this conclusion, Columbiason resolved to fit out an expedition, to be led by himself personally, and to go in search of the ashes of his ancestors. This, of course, he could not well do until he had brought the matter to the attention of his life-long companion, Madam Columbiana, from whom, so far, he had kept all information regarding the ancient knight's reflection on the lake and his own good fortune, in which he now felt it time for her to share. He knew that Madam Columbiana would approve his plans and co-operate with him fully in the performance of any act necessary to perfect them. He therefore directed his steps to the library, and on entering that precinct of knowledge seated himself at a handsomely carved ebony table, summoned an attendant, by the touch of an electric button, and instructed him to request the madam to make it convenient to appear at the library with as little delay as possible, to meet him on matters of great importance.

After a little time the handsome portieres of the main entrance to the library were pushed aside hurriedly by two delicate hands and between them stood Madam Columbiana, rather a matronly looking woman, with regular features and a head of hair slightly tinged with gray, dressed à la pompadour and exhibiting a forehead of an intellectual cast, surmounting a face kindly and withal pleasing to look upon. Her dress was plain—a dark blue skirt and a bodice of red and white material, neatly made but without any gaudiness. There she stood between the portieres, unnoticed and gazing at the head of the house of Columbiason, who was still seated at the library table deeply engaged in thought, which was suddenly arrested by the clear musical voice of his wife, who said: "Well, my dear, here I am!"

Columbiason, startled from his reverie, looked up suddenly, and beholding his wife, manifested no little uneasiness at the sudden interruption of his thought. "Why," he said, "I did not expect you unannounced, and your sudden appearance somewhat disconcerted my train of thought.

"Are you not well, my dear?" inquired the madam.

"Oh yes, quite well. Why do you ask?" replied Columbiason.

"This is the first time during all our married life," replied his wife, "that it has been thought necessary for me to be announced before entering the presence of my own husband, in our own home; and I thought, dear, that possibly the press of business upon your mind had slightly affected your reason. You know, dear, that when a man reaches the prime of life he must exercise more care in everything than when of a youthful age. Besides, dear, you know you sent for me, and surely it should not be necessary for me to be announced to you on such an occasion."

"You doubtless think so," responded Columbiason, apparently not having recovered from his vexation; "but," he continued, "I do not think we have been pursuing the proper course. I think propriety requires now, especially, that you should be announced on all occasions; and, if you will pardon me, I think it scarcely proper to appear attired in such

old-fashioned wearing apparel as that which you have on."

"Old-fashioned!" exclaimed Madam Columbiana, in a spirit of apparent indignation. "Why, goodness gracious!" she continued, "I never heard you complain before of red, white and blue. I have always thought it charming and becoming!"

"So it was once, but times have changed! Everything has changed! I have changed; you have changed; and you can't expect to wear that color forever," replied Columbiason.

"Yes, forever and forever; so long as it is becoming, why not?" responded the madam.

"Well, I think you have outgrown it; but we won't discuss that now, I have something more important than the red, white and blue to talk about, and which I am sure will interest if not surprise you," said Columbiason, as he arose and offered the madam a chair by his side.

He then unfolded to his wife the details of the knight's reflection on the lake, relating the manner in which the knight appeared to him and how the voice ap-

peared to speak to him. He related also the substance of his communication to the heraldic college, as well as the substance of the reply received therefrom, to all of which the madam listened with the greatest interest, without venturing to say more than a mere "Yes" occasionally.

Finally, Columbiason exhibited the original design which had been enclosed to him in the letter from the said college. The madam examined it carefully, as she listened to his objections to it and to his opinion as to what he thought himself entitled in the way of a crest, in view of the importance of his position. At last Columbiason brought forth a large portfolio-like object, from which he took his own design of the armorial ensigns to which he felt himself entitled, and asked his wife's opinion of it.

Madam Columbiana examined, first the goose, then the lion's head, and then the goose and then the lion's head, every time she looked at the goose, turning her head to glance at her liege lord. She then observed that she didn't know anything about such things; and she took the liberty to inquire which one he was supposed to

resemble? Columbiason appeared considerably annoyed at the question and replied that it was not a question of resemblance; that it was a question of his title. The madam replied that she didn't think it necessary for him to get his title from abroad, and she didn't see any use for ancestors if a goose on a lion's head was all one was entitled to from them; that, in fact, she didn't see any earthly good in it anyway.

Columbiason reminded his wife that it was not the thing itself but the power behind it that carried weight. This seemed to astonish the madam, who held the design in front of her husband and remarked, that the only power she saw behind it was himself and that was, she thought, all the power he required.

Columbiason seemed at his wit's end how to convey to his wife the importance of a foreign coat-of-arms and to explain its real object. Finally, he observed that it was the power which the people thought or imagined was behind it that elevated the rightful possessor of it in their estimation and imparted to such possessor a

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sense of his own importance and superiority.

Madame Columbiana shook her head and replied that she was afraid she was not of the imaginative kind; that even if she were, she could not understand how power, only in imagination, could be power, any more than a mere sense of one's superiority could make him superior; that if it could do so, she could not help wondering what would become of his superiority if he lost his senses. She then took occasion to remark that she was only a "Colonial Dame," and a "Daughter of the Revolution," but she had more power than any armorial ensign from the grave of an ancient ancestor.

Columbiason replied, in a spirit of some little agitation, that those modern American excrescences, as he called them, were without prestige, save in their own country; that they could not bestow on their members armorial ensigns of any kind; that their origin was too recent to permit the affiliation of their members with ancient ancestry, and that the beautiful antiquity was to them, therefore, absolutely a thing of the past—a thing beyond

their comprehension, without form and void; that antiquity would not recognize them or contribute to their support.

This, of course, Madam Columbiana was forced to admit, and Columbiason felt that he had gained a point. He, therefore, began to take her more fully into his confidence and disclosed to her his intention to seek the ashes of his ancestors. His wife, after listening to his plans, began to appreciate the situation and to enter into them. Just why, she did not know. Columbiason had, however, evidently made an impression on her mind; for she began to act toward him in a spirit of greater deference than formerly, as well, also, as to feel her own importance as a part of his household. She asked him the nature of his ancestor's ashes—whether red, white and blue, or inky black, and what she could do for them on their arrival, together with many other questions of a similar nature, which led him to feel that she was as ignorant of the value of his ancestral ashes as she was of the importance of the ancient coat-of-arms; but he appreciated the value of her services as an aid to the furtherance of

his cause, and her ability to lend dignity to all of his efforts by becoming conduct; and after obtaining her consent to abandon the combination of red, white and blue colors for those which he thought more suitable to the occasions in which she would, later, be obliged to figure, as the wife of one so elevated as he was destined to become, Columbiason and Madam Columbiana parted in a state of harmony and with a mutual understanding as to the rights and duties of each, in a matter so promising as the future supereminence of the head of the House of Columbiason.

CHAPTER III

THE ANGLOPHOBIC FLAME

Columbiason, elated with his success in securing the co-operation of Madam Columbiana, and assured of his English ancestry and of his right to a coat-of-arms under such descent, began to feel quite English - like. He therefore deemed it fitting and proper to do everything possible after the English fashion, which he and his household aped to perfection; and finally he felt he was ready to prepare for the great effort of his life—the discovery of the ashes of his ancestors!

The “British Lion”—the handsomest and most formidable of Columbiason’s yachts, had, therefore, been ordered to be made ready for the voyage to “Spurn Head.” The choicest provisions and wines were provided for the occasion and were being stowed away in proper fashion under the direction of the English com-

mander, whom it was thought proper and fitting to designate as "Admiral," and under the supervision of his subordinates. In the mean time, it occurred to Columbiason that there should be arranged a suitable reception for the ashes of his ancestors on their arrival from the distant foreign shore; but being unfamiliar with receptions of antiquated material, he felt constrained to seek information from a certain Count "Do Little," whom he had imported from the British Isles and made a part of his household furniture.

The only duty the "Count" had formerly performed was to occasionally show himself, more especially to elderly women, to let them know that he formed a part of the Columbiason household. It was deemed inadvisable to permit him to appear before young and middle-aged women, lest he should become an attraction to them and be lost to the household—which would have been an irretrievable loss indeed, in view of his knowledge of matters of precedence and other matters in connection with English customs, on which subject Columbiason felt the necessity of enlightenment.

It was seldom necessary to consult with the "Count," but when it was deemed necessary to do so, a sort of special embassy was sent to his quarters to convey him to the presence of the head of the house of Columbiason, where he would remain until the conference was ended, and would then return, in like manner, to his apartments—a perfect lap of luxury, in one sense, yet in another sense a cage, from which he was seldom taken except for exhibition.

When the question of the aforesaid reception presented itself to the mind of the son of Columbia, the special embassy, consisting of two lackey-like individuals, capable of doing the knee-bending act to perfection, were summoned to the august presence of Columbiason and instructed to convey or escort the do-little Count to the library, for a conference on a matter of great importance.

Count Do Little might with equal propriety have been named "Do Nothing"; for the retinue of servants attending upon that dignitary performed most of the duties devolving upon him. Had that not been the case, he would have kept

Columbiason waiting all day, or, more likely, have made it necessary for that personage to call upon him in person. As it was, he did not appear at the library until after the lapse of a considerable time, during which Columbiason was kept in suspense and anxiety. At last the two lackey-like individuals returned, backing themselves into the library, with many bows to "His Dignity" (as the Count, who followed close upon their toes, was sometimes called). The lackeys then separated, one passing to the right, and the other to the left of the Count; and, folding their arms, they made their exit, side by side, leaving "His Dignity" in the presence of Columbiason.

"Ah," ejaculated Columbiason, on perceiving the Count. "Your Dignity is just in time; I desire to consult with you on the method proper to pursue on the reception in my country of the ashes of my ancestors! What is the custom among Englishmen on occasions of that nature, if you please?"

Now, Count Do Little was supposed to be well posted on matters of every nature pertaining to customs of English Royalty,

but here, a question had arisen on which he had had no enlightenment whatever; yet, from the high position which Columbiason had attained, the Count at once concluded that there must have been a custom among Englishmen of which he had inadvertently permitted himself to remain ignorant, or it would not have been referred to by his benefactor; and not wishing to jeopardize his standing as an exponent of English ways and customs, he replied: "Weally, my lord, it has been a long time since an Englishman gave a formal reception to the ashes of his ancestors, don cher know. The last reception of that nature must have taken place, don cher know, long before the invention of printing, if at all; and all the scribes must have become exhausted, don cher know, trying to get the thing down, for there seems to be no record of the ceremony; but my knowledge of English customs will enable me to properly instruct a master of ceremonies in the necessary duties of such an occasion, don cher know."

"A great man!" exclaimed Columbia-
son. "Your Dignity believes, then, that,
with the aid of the printing press and the

phonographic art, together with the other modern improvements, such a reception could be satisfactorily recorded in this age?"

"Undoubtedly, don cher know," replied the Count. "But," he continued, "although the record may be modern, don cher know, the custom and the rules of precedence should be after the antiquated methods, and the ceremony should be observed with as much pomp as ancient methods would require, don cher know; for a dead ancestor is much more important these days than a live one, don cher know."

"Exactly; but as to these rules of precedence; while I never studied rules of that kind, I suppose I can learn them," responded Columbiason.

"Oh dear, yes; but there is no use of such rules unless you have the, pardon me—the things—the quality, don cher know,—the important people to observe them," ejaculated the Count.

"Am I not of sufficient importance to be able to observe the rules of precedence?" inquired Columbiason.

"A, yes, but, pardon me—there, there is not enough of you—pardon me, don

cher know, but in a republic, every man is a rule unto himself, don cher know—not so in a monarchy," replied the Count.

"Who is more important than I?" asked Columbiason.

"Oh dear, pardon me, your lordship, a, but, a——"

"Go on! That sounds all right," interrupted Columbiason.

"Well," continued the Count. "Pardon me, but it will be necessary for you to have a master of the rolls, a knight of the garter, a keeper of the seal; and you should have also a comptroller of the household, a treasurer of the household, a master of the horse, a knight commander of the bath, an equerry and an extra equerry to your lordship—a, pardon me—to——"

"Go ahead, Count! That's all right—I am getting interested," interrupted Columbiason again.

"And, a, gentlemen ushers to—to your lordship—your *lordship*," continued the Count. "And," he went on, "your lordship is familiar, of course, with the duties of these distinguished persons?"

"Quite right," replied Columbiason, not wishing to expose his ignorance of matters

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so apparently trivial; "but," he continued, "I will also talk the matter over with Madam Columbiana, whose ideas of such matters are always valuable and suggestive."

The son of Columbia then took occasion to express to the Count his gratification at the knowledge of which he had become possessed and at the masterly manner in which the Count had handled a subject so foreign to his own former understanding. After having thus expressed himself, he touched a button, whereupon the two lackey-like individuals reappeared, and in the same manner as they ushered "His Dignity" into the library those necessary adjuncts of the Columbiason household scraped and bowed him out of that receptacle of knowledge and back to his own quarters.

Soon after the Count had made his exit from the presence of Columbiason, Madam Columbiana was announced, and in like manner as the Count had entered the library was ushered into the presence of her liege lord by the aforesaid lackeys.

The Madam was more gorgeously attired than on the occasion of her last in-

terview with her husband at the same place, and the red, white and blue colors, to which he had objected, were absent.

Columbiason related to his wife the substance of the information received from the Count and read to her a memorandum which he had made of the various "creations" necessary to make the rules of precedence effective.

It was agreed between these heads of the Columbiason household that the duties of the treasurer and comptroller were well understood, and they decided upon the appointees to those positions without difficulty. The master of the horse was not quite so easy a matter for their decision, but it was finally decided to change the name of the groom to the master of that noble animal. As to the knight of the garter, they agreed that, although garters were not as fashionable as they were at one time, they could see no reason why there should not be a knight to supply them, as long as the laws of England required it.

When it came to the master of the rolls, Madam Columbiana settled what might have proved a difficult problem, by saying

that, while for herself she preferred bread, she never had had any objection to rolls, provided they were well baked, and that was where a master would come in. It was thereupon agreed that the office of master of the rolls should be created, but Columbiason sacrificed his dignity sufficiently to allow the appointment of that master to be made by his wife, absolutely.

The matter of keeper of the seal puzzled both of the heads of the house of Columbiason and was the cause of some little discussion between them, Columbiason arguing that, in the first place, they had no seal, and in the second place, he could see no necessity for the appointment of a special keeper of it, even if they had one. Madam Columbiana suggested, however, the propriety of obtaining a seal, even if necessity required sending to the North Pole for it, as long as the Count had urged the importance of a keeper of that animal in the line of precedence; and she saw no reason why the seal could not be obtained by the time her liege lord returned from England with the ashes of his ancestors. The madam had proven herself as valuable

an assistant in the seal problem as she had in the matter of the master of the rolls; and it was finally decided to start a search for one of those fur-lined attachments to the Columbiason household, and to secure him at any price. The appointment of a keeper of the animal was a matter which they concluded to leave until its arrival.

When the knight-commander of the bath was reached on the list, Madam Columbiana could not refrain from expressing her astonishment at the necessity for a night commander and no day commander of that ablutionary institution. It seemed to her incredible that all Englishmen should bathe only at night. Columbiason suggested, however, that the night-bathing commandery might be due to the fact that the fogs were very heavy in that country and the inhabitants doubtless suffered sufficiently from moisture during the daytime and declined to indulge in nocturnal ablutions; hence the necessity for a commander to command and force obedience to the sanitary laws prevailing in the country. At any rate, it was evident from what the Count had

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stated, that English people bathed at night and had bath commanders when they indulged in that luxury; and he thought it best, therefore, to obey the Count's injunctions by creating the office and making the appointment. An appointee was accordingly agreed upon.

The question of the appointment of an equerry and an extra equerry, was problematical indeed. The heads of the house of Columbiason did not know whether the Count meant a stable for horses, or an officer of nobles or princes, charged with the care and management of their horses. If the latter, Columbiason suggested that it would first be necessary to secure the nobles and princes, and that might prove more difficult than the securing of a seal.

Madam Columbiana won for herself a higher place in the heart of her liege lord by assuring him that the securing of nobles would be the easiest problem to be solved by their united efforts, and suggesting that, as the Count had already honored him by addressing him as "lord," it might not be inappropriate for him to apply to his Majesty, the King of England, for the full-fledged title, so that, when he returned

to his native land with the ashes of his ancestors, he would not only be on an equality with those ashes, but the equerry would indeed be the equerry to "His Lordship."

This suggestion was in accord with his own thought and appealed so overwhelmingly to his sense of propriety that, for the moment, he became oblivious of all forms appertaining to his dignity, and actually embraced his wife without announcement, as he gave vent to open expressions of gratitude at the manifestation of so large a volume of semi-original thought on her part. This seemed to suggest to him a new idea, which he regarded of great importance. It happened that, during their early married life, Columbiason and his faithful Columbian had gladly become the guardians of an infant child—a little girl of surpassing beauty. This child had developed into maidenhood and was much adored, not only on account of her constantly increasing beauty, but for her many virtues; indeed, wherever the maiden appeared she was almost worshipped by her many admirers.

This beautiful child came to her guardians in a manner peculiar and deeply in-

teresting. They were then poor and had much to contend against; for the country was new in those days, and pioneer life entailed upon them, not only many hardships, but it was not a little dangerous on account of the lurking evils which constantly beset them.

In the twilight of a certain evening, Columbiason had finished his daily duties and had returned to the modest little home of the twain to greet his charming help-meet, who, however sad or down-hearted from the gloomy prospects before them, always met her husband with a cheerful smile. The air was fragrant with the odor of honeysuckles, whose vines climbed the lattice work surrounding the doorway to the humble cottage, and also from the perfume of hundreds of roses and flowers which adorned the garden, made beautiful by nature and by the hands of the devoted pair.

Columbiason greeted his wife with a kiss and returned her smiles, as he seated himself beside her on a picturesque little porch, overlooking the charming garden. The two soon allowed their minds to wander to their future possibilities, and natu-

THE "CHILD OF THE SKY."



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rally, their faces betrayed the inner workings of their souls, which were cast down at their inability to realize what the morrow would bring forth.

Suddenly there appeared in the heavens an illumination, the like of which they had never seen—more brilliant, it seemed to them, than even the rays of the sun at noon-tide, and so dazzling that, awe-stricken, they were impelled to place their hands before their faces to shield their eyes from its penetrating rays.

The illumination gradually faded away, and as they removed their hands from their faces, to their great astonishment they beheld, at the place in the sky from which the light had faded, a vision of the beautiful child. The effect upon the devoted couple was inspiring. They arose to their feet simultaneously, their faces beaming with delight, and clutched with their hands the air, made purer by the entrancing light which beamed from the face of the beautiful child, of whom they so eagerly desired to obtain possession. Little did they dream that their earnest desire would be gratified. It may have been due to their very earnestness, but on re-

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gaining themselves, their astonishment was much greater, for they beheld, standing before them, in all her beauty and loveliness, the very object of their desire—the same beautiful child who had appeared to them in the illumined sky—a daughter of the Goddess of Liberty! Such a beam of sunshine! Such heaven-born illumination following the darkest hour of their despair—the “darkest hour just before the dawn.”

Immediately the faces of the united pair beamed with smiles of joy and gladness. They felt that now they had something beyond themselves to live for, and they called the name of the beautiful child “Liberte,” because of the sense of freedom which they experienced from the very moment of her entry into their home; and they resolved to surround the child with every safeguard and ever to protect her, even at the risk of their own lives. Then they fell upon their knees and lifted up their voices in thanks to the Creator of the universe for the gift which had changed their hearts from sadness to gladness and joy.

The test of the fidelity of Columbiason and his helpmeet to this foundling of the

sky soon came; for their right to her was disputed by a tyrant, not because of her beauty or her charms, but because of his hatred of her guardians, who had fled from the rule of his tyrannical hand, and whom he desired to deprive of so lovely and prepossessing a creature. The struggle was long and severe, but the Great Divine Controller remembered the spirit of thankfulness in which the guardians of the beautiful child had lifted up their voices to Him and He heard their constant prayers for the safety of their charming ward; so the tyrant was defeated in his every attempt to obtain possession of the child, who became more and more attached to her guardians and who was equally beloved by them in return.

Now, Columbiason had beheld with pride the growing beauty and charms of this fair maiden, Liberte, and had particularly noticed the deep and lasting impression which they had made upon a certain young man by the name of "America," who fairly idolized her, and whose attentions, it was strongly suspected, the maiden reciprocated. He concluded, therefore, that if the maiden were so much be-

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loved by America, her charms would doubtless inspire the admiration of one of noble birth, on whom, in view of the great importance of the Columbiason household, he began to consider the practicability of bestowing her hand; he therefore resolved to bring the matter to the attention of Madam Columbiana, whose attachment for the maiden had grown stronger and stronger as the years passed by. To her credit be it said, the madam vehemently declined to entertain such a proposition, and took occasion to refer her husband to the struggles of their pioneer days, carrying his mind back to the little garden home, made so bright and happy by the light of the sparkling eyes and the angelic features of the "child of the sky," as they were wont to call Liberte, whose advent into their home had been the means of enabling them to put to flight the evil genius who was striving to enslave and hold in bondage their very souls.

Columbiason tried to listen to his wife's objections and to her reference to their early struggles, made successful by the inspiration derived from, first the vision and then the possession of, the beautiful

daughter of the goddess, but his mind was so much absorbed in the affairs appertaining to the preparation for the reception of the ashes of his ancestors, that he confounded the vision at the little garden home with the reflection of the ancient knight on the lake; and in his zeal to enter the realm of the ancient nobility, he quite forgot the incident of the ingress of his ward into the home and hearts of her guardians.

He argued that the necessity of the occasion warranted a change from past methods; that they were about to become identified with the ancient nobility, with whom they would naturally associate in future, and it would be impossible to give to Liberte the care and attention to which she was entitled, and which they had, so far, given her, thus exposing her to the cruel world, possibly causing her beauty to fade, and placing her in a position of peril from which, alone, she would be unable to extricate herself, and she would perish from want of care and solicitous attention; that, on the other hand, to bestow the hand of Liberte on some nobleman of their choice, she would be placed

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in a position of equality with themselves and they would still be enabled to recognize her and even to admire her.

Madam Columbiana thought deeply over the proposition and then inquired of her husband what objection there could be to furthering the cause of America in his constant attentions to Liberte, by the bestowal of her hand in marriage upon him.

This proposition met with disapproval on the part of Columbiason on the ground that America was absolutely unfamiliar with the customs prevailing among the nobility of foreign lands, and his ways and manners would become obnoxious and bring upon him much ridicule, in which not only Liberte, but even themselves would be obliged to share, to their detriment and loss of prestige among the noble aristocracy with whom they were about to affiliate.

This mode of reasoning must have appealed to Madam Columbiana as worthy of consideration, for she yielded to her husband's wish and determined, with him, to await a favorable opportunity to ally Liberte with some ancient house of nobles. She stated, however, that she considered

America a perfect gentleman and admired him very much. In this Columbiason agreed, and replied that America was good enough in his way, but he thought their position warranted their seeking new acquaintances, less plebeian in their tastes and requirements. This ended the discussion as to Liberte's welfare.

The appointment of the various officials suggested by the Count, except a marshal, and the attention to a few other essentials which "His Dignity" was to look after for the august reception, having been duly considered and passed upon by Columbiason and his good wife, the electric button was again touched and the two lackey-like individuals made their appearance and bowed the honorable lady of the household from the presence of her husband, who soon afterward made his exit from the library to complete his arrangements for the voyage in search of the ashes of his ancestors.

CHAPTER IV

THE VOYAGE

The "British Lion," with its electrical engines in full operation and its sails set to windward, moved rapidly out to sea, with its fifty odd flags so rigid in the breeze that on each one could plainly be seen the Columbiason coat-of-arms—a goose perched on the head of a lion—all bound for "Spurn Head," where lay the ashes of the ancestors of Columbiason, who stood, like a Napoleon, on the upper deck of the warlike looking craft, one hand hanging by his side and the other laid across his breast and holding a scroll, in which was the diagram of his coat-of-arms and the Gallinaceous name of the ancestors, from whom—or which—he had, according to the archives of the college of heraldry descended. Beside him stood the enormous golden urn, with his coat-of-arms thereon engraved, and intended as the receptacle of the said ashes; and leaning

against the great urn was a silver shovel and a silver pick-axe, intended for use by Columbiason himself, as he had expressed his determination to personally unearth the ashes of his own ancestors.

Thus stood the head of the Columbiason arms, aft of his English craft, which had been launched in English waters, manned by English sailors and officers and directed by an English admiral, as Columbiason was pleased to designate him. A new world had opened up for exploration by "his lordship;" and as he stood there in all his dignity, he meditated upon the fact that on the land and on the sea the Columbiason coat-of-arms proudly heralded to the world his metamorphosis; for his armorial ensigns were flying in the breeze from his mansion, as well as from his craft, the lion's head bowing and the goose's wings flopping a gentle *au revoir*, as the "British Lion" with its valuable cargo sped on its way to the ash heaps of the past.

Proudly the Columbiason floating palace rose on the waves of the Atlantic, as they ascended high in air as if to kiss the sky; and gently it descended into the watery valleys to rise and rise again;

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but more proudly than his craft, or the waves which bore it aloft, rose Columbiason in his own estimation, as he thought of the entrancing effect of the ashes of the past on the present generation, and addressing the waves, he exclaimed: "Rise as high as ye will, O ye waves! nor think ye can ascend as high as the great head of the 'Insessores!' No wonder that ye toss your caps of milky whiteness high in air at the sight of so great a personage! Ye are but my slaves! Bear me quickly to the funeral pyre of mine ancestors, that I may plant their ashes on mine own soil and perpetuate, to all future generations, the name of the great order of which I am now the recognized head!"

Having thus addressed the waves of the sea, he directed one of the officials of the craft to see that the great urn was conveyed to his private cabin; then shouldering his pick-axe and shovel, he strolled leisurely toward the entrance to the cabin.

Dusk had been gradually showing its grimy face, and suddenly darkness seemed to appear upon the face of the deep; and when Columbiason arrived at the door of his cabin, had it not been for the electric

lights, which had been turned on, he would have experienced great difficulty in locating the door-knob. This he grasped and was about to turn, when he noticed, as he cast his eyes aft of the yacht, in the direction of his native land, a brightness in the sky which appeared to be coming nearer and nearer. This, in view of the great speed which the "British Lion" was making, interested him deeply, and letting go his hold on the door-knob, he laid the shovel and pick against the railing of the craft and walked hurriedly aft, where he met the admiral, who was on his way to the pilot-house to give some instructions to the pilot, or captain, and who, in the darkness, made himself known to his superior. Columbiason, addressing the admiral, exclaimed, "Behold yon light in the heavens, Admiral! Why such brilliancy in this hour of darkness?"

"I fail to behold a light, sir," replied the admiral, in a surprised tone of voice.

Columbiason could scarcely believe it possible that the admiral's vision was so defective as not to be able to distinguish a light to him so brilliant, and which ap-

peared to be getting more and more brilliant every moment.

"Fail to see?" he exclaimed, in an astonished and inquiring tone. "Why, Admiral," he continued, "it cometh nearer all the time—'tis almost upon us! See!"

"I will hasten to the pilot-house and get the telescope," replied the admiral, hurrying his steps in that direction.

No sooner was Columbiason alone than the light appeared directly before him, yet high above his head, and partially obscured by a cloud, the outlining of which was illumined by the reflection of the light from behind it, somewhat like a cloud that had crossed the face of the setting sun.

Columbiason gazed intently at the cloud, which was now quite upon him, and was about to call to the admiral. As he raised his eyes, however, the cloud appeared to open or separate, the lining from the brilliant light behind it forming a framework, in the centre of which appeared a woman's face, beautiful to behold but careworn and showing marks of the greatest anxiety. "Mother!" cried Columbiason, as he staggered against the railing of the craft, only to see the cloud close over the facial vision

and obscure it from his view; and again darkness was upon the face of the deep. In the mean time, the admiral had arrived with the telescope, which he leveled over the railing of the craft at the horizon, in a vain attempt to discover the light to which Columbiason had called his attention; but the light was not for him to see. Columbiason was leaning against the railing, his eyes cast toward the sea, the roaring waves of which was the only audible sound, save that of the propellers and the machinery of the craft, which could scarcely be heard above the din of the ocean's rollers.

"I am unable to perceive any light whatever, sir; nor even the sky or the sea, sir. There is nothing but darkness, sir—absolute darkness, sir!" exclaimed the admiral, removing the telescope from the railing.

"Quite right, Admiral. I must have been dreaming. I—I thought I beheld the face of my mother!" replied Columbiason, in a state of agitation.

"I am glad it was only a dream, sir," replied the admiral, as he wiped the cold perspiration from his brow. "A bad omen, I fear, sir," he continued, placing

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his telescope in its case. "We sea-dogs look out for breakers, sir, when we see things that we *don't* see, sir. Perhaps if you took a little something into your stomach you would feel better. We had better find our way to the cabin, sir." Thus saying, he took Columbiason by the arm and helped him to the cabin door, when the latter thanked him and, again grasping the door-knob, entered his cabin, seated himself at a small table which stood in the middle of the room and summoned a waiter, from whom he ordered a light dinner.

The dinner was brought in good time, and after partaking sparingly of it, Columbiason retired to his berth to try and forget, in quiet repose, the incident which had stirred his soul to something like a momentary conscious regret that he had undertaken the expedition. Soon he was in the arms of Morpheus, apparently as unconscious as the ashes of his ancestors. Thus passed the first day of his voyage toward the goal of his ambition.

CHAPTER V

THE STRUGGLE FOR PRECEDENCY

Madam Columbiana, through the good offices of Count Do Little, had, immediately on the departure of the "British Lion" with her liege lord, become unusually active in aiding the preparations for the coming great reception. The seal had been more easily obtained than had been expected, much to her delight; and the installation of its keeper in the duties which were to devolve upon him was a mere matter of detail, which was readily accomplished.

The master of the rolls was given his authority to look after the baking of that dainty cereal compound and instructed to see that they were done to the taste of the honored guests.

The knight of the garter was instructed to keep himself well supplied with that henceforth necessary article of wearing apparel and to furnish, when called upon

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to do so, as many thereof as might be required. The appointment of this worthy dignitary suggested to Madam Columbiana the creation of another titled dignitary in the person of the "Master of the Knee Breeches," which article, the Count had informed her, should henceforth and forever constitute an important part of the make-up of the male creation. The appointee was, therefore, selected and instructed to secure, through, such assistants as he might deem necessary to employ, the measurements for knee breeches, etc., of such of the male inhabitants of the country as might be fortunate enough to be honored with an invitation to participate in the reception. There was a special injunction to that "Master," however, against making any breeches of red, white and blue.

In accordance with the understanding had with Columbiason, the groom was dignified by being promoted to "Master of the Horse," and was instructed to master that animal after the manner in which it was managed by the coachman, but with more dignity and authority; and he was given the extra authority to employ

such assistants or adjutant masters as might be necessary to support his dignity.

The head butler was promptly promoted to the position of "Comptroller of the Household," also with power to employ his own assistants.

The "Mistress of the Robes" was Madam Columbiana's own special appointment, and the appointee was instructed by herself as to the nature of the robes and when to supply the demand therefor.

Then came the pursuivants and the extra pursuivants, whose appointments were suggested by the Count.

Knights-bachelors and companions of the bath also occupied conspicuous places on the list of distinguished creations who were to participate in the great reception. A marshal and a master of ceremonies were, of course, necessary adjuncts to the important roll of dignitaries, and they were appointed in good time to took after the important matters relating to their distinguished offices.

Then came the matter of the appointment of a reception committee to receive the ashes of the ancestors of the distinguished head of the house of Columbiason. The

selection of appointees to compose this august body was fraught with much difficulty and was the cause of no little commotion, which might have led to a positive disturbance and to the countermanding of all plans for the reception, to the great embarrassment of both the madam and the Count.

The committee was to consist of one hundred members and only of persons who could, beyond the peradventure of a doubt, trace their ancestry back at least one hundred and fifty years. In the haste to complete the preparations for the reception, however, a little matter of the definition of "ancestry" had been overlooked, and a clash between the advocates of domestic and foreign ancestry unfortunately resulted.

It happened that what were familiarly known in those days as "Colonial Dames" and the "Daughters and Sons of the Revolution"—a certain revolt that took place way back in the 18th century and of which, it is believed, a history is somewhere extant, although long since forgotten—had been appointed on the distinguished committee. These ladies and gentlemen ex-

perienced no difficulty in tracing their ancestry back the required time, but so often and, indeed, so openly did they pride themselves on their ancestry, that their action appears to have invited criticism and, it is to be regretted, actual jealousy, on the part of the members of the committee, who equally prided themselves on their *foreign* ancestry; and that spirit of antagonism led the latter distinguished personages to challenge the right of the former dignitaries, who supposed themselves to be at least equally distinguished, to membership on the committee.

The dignity of the occasion would not, of course, permit the antagonistic forces to come to blows (a very fortunate circumstance, the claimants to foreign ancestry being in the majority), so the contending parties contented themselves with the most exquisite courtesies that the language could invent in conveying to one another the opinions which each harbored of his or her antagonist.

It was contended, after the difficulty had been adjusted, that it was at least very impolitic, if not positively presumptuous on the part of the advocates of domestic

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ancestry to deign to consider themselves the equals of the advocates of foreign ancestry. However, it is the privilege of an historian to state facts, not to express opinions; and we must leave our readers to their own conclusions as to the right and wrong of the question. Suffice it to say, the ladies and gentlemen of the "Revolution" and the ladies of the "Colonial Dames" argued, with much force, that the principles that controlled domestic ancestry were exactly the same as those which controlled foreign ancestry. Their antagonists, however, pretended to be unable to perceive any ground for such similarity; and one of their members took occasion to reflect, in courteous terms, of course, upon the "verdure and freshness of domestic ancestry!"

This reflection naturally, and possibly justly, disturbed the equilibrium of a distinguished "Son of the Revolution" who, in glowing, though equally courteous terms, undertook to distinguish between youth, with its blooming cheeks, its living energies, its robust faculties and its attractive and enticing beauty, and extreme old age, superannuated, useless, dying and decaying.

He then likened foreign ancestry to the latter, which he relegated to the age of antiquity, only to be called forth by its equally decaying posterity, in the persons of certain members of a committee, appointed to receive the ancestral ashes and plant them in a soil rich with living phosphate, in the forlorn hope that those ashes would become revivified sufficiently to enable those ancient members of that antiquated committee to trade on the credulity of a credulous public and make it believe in the justice of their claim of the superiority of death over life.

The orator concluded his remarks by saying that, notwithstanding all the so-called verdure and freshness of domestic ancestry, to which his opponent had referred in terms of respectable sarcasm, it afforded him pleasure to remind his antagonists that, in that very freshness it had the advantage of being at least recognized, while ancient ancestry had positively decayed beyond recognition and its votaries had but the impression left in their nostrils by its decaying odors, as a reminder of their assumed superiority over their fellows.

This oratorical effusiveness was the master stroke of a master mind, and it is not to be wondered at that these utterances of this able "Son of the Revolution" have come down to us as a classic under the title of "Posterity's Oration on Ancestry!"

It might naturally be supposed that this masterly effort on the part of the worthy "Son of the Revolution," would have established equality of domestic with ancient ancestry and have secured to the "Colonial Dames" and to the "Sons and Daughters of the Revolution" their places on the distinguished committee; but such was not the fact; for a vote was taken by the members of the committee, at the suggestion of the aggrieved ancient ancestral member (as a chairman of the committee had not yet been elected), as to the definition of "ancestry," as regarded by the committee, and a majority vote disclosed the fact that, in so far as the committee was concerned, there was no domestic ancestry. It was then moved and, of course, opposed by the minority, that no member of the committee who was unable to trace his or her ancestry beyond the land of his birth (meaning the United

States—the land in which the committee was assembled) should be regarded as a member of the committee.

Notwithstanding the fact that Madam Columbiana was appealed to, the worthy domestic Sons and Daughters were obliged to retire from the committee and their places were promptly filled by foreign ancestral posterity. Thus, as was said at the time, was a blot on the century perpetrated; and it has always been held that, as no chairman of the committee had been elected, its action was illegal; but so many queer things have been done by the posterity of ancient ancestry that this action is not now regarded as of great moment.

The reception committee having at last become organized to the entire satisfaction of its members, perfect harmony seemed assured; but hope soon stood trembling with one foot on harmony and the other on discord, until harmony rolled from under and left both feet trying to adjust the balance on discord—an utter impossibility, it seemed; for an occasion unexpectedly arose which bade fair to embroil the members of the celebrated committee in a contentious dispute more boisterous than that

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which had entertained the worthy members of that committee in their struggle for foreign and domestic ancestral predominance.

The time had arrived in the life of the committee for the election of a chairman, or, more properly speaking, a leader or chief, and each member of the committee, laboring under the impression that he or she would be enabled to convince every other member of that notable body that his or her ancestors had been longer in the grave than had the ancestors of any other member, readily consented that the member who could trace his or her ancestry back the farthest should be unanimously declared such chief. This was a most exciting contention and promised for a time to destroy the committee's usefulness, which would have been a great calamity.

Many documents were produced by the various members in the great effort to prove priority of right to the chiefdom. To go into the details of this struggle would, however, prove uninteresting to any but to the posterity of the members of that wonderful committee; but all the students of history will doubtless be glad to

know the name of the successful competitor for the prize.

After a prolonged discussion and the careful examination of the numerous documents, involving the consumption of many days, a little old man, with snowy white hair and a long and equally white beard, arose as one from the tomb, trembling and shaking like a sensitive aspen leaf, and stated in a weak and squeaky tone of voice that he had sat quietly every day listening to the discussions and watching the proceedings, without taking any active part in the controversy, hoping that some one might be able to disclose his or her right to ancestral preferment to the great office or dignity awaiting such disclosure; but, knowing so well his own ancestry, he was very much afraid that, however little he might care to fulfil the arduous duties which must naturally devolve upon the head of so august a body, he would be called upon to accept that office, in which case he would, of course, endeavor to perform those duties faithfully.

As might readily be imagined, great deference was accorded the little old man; indeed, one of the members remarked that

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the speaker must be his own ancestor, and immediately resigned any claim which he might possibly have had to the great office.

The little old man then stated that he was "Pantomime Decanter," and was descended from the Pandian dynasty, which flourished in Deccan at least five hundred years before Christ. The other members of the committee were too modest to inquire as to what the Pandian dynasty or Deccan were. That they believed the statement of the little old man was evident from the fact that a tremendous cheer arose from the throats of all the remaining members of the committee save one, and that one, who could trace his ancestry no farther back than the fifth century, had the audacity to challenge the little old man to prove his descent from that ancient dynasty. The latter was, however, equal to the emergency; for he replied in a slow and trembling but dignified tone of voice, that it would take the honorable challenger one thousand years to peruse the documents tending to such proof and would necessitate a search through many libraries and archives. At

this juncture, another tremendous cheer was heard from the, now, friends of Pantomime Decanter, who was at last unanimously elected to the high position by acclamation; and the reception committee was finally considered ready to receive the ancient ancestral ashes.

The great question of precedence had not been considered by the committee; nor, it is strange to relate, had such a question occurred to any of the members, until the organization of the great body was complete and an incident occurred which brought the matter forcibly to its attention. It transpired that the Master of the Rolls and the Master of the Horse had had a little misunderstanding between themselves as to which one of them was entitled, from the dignity of his position, to precede the other at the reception of the ancestral ashes. The Master of the Horse contended, with some show of reason, that as the ashes would have to be conveyed to some destination determined upon by their owner, horses would doubtless be required for the purpose, on account of their ancient usefulness as beasts of burden; and as he was the master of that ani-

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mal, his presence, and consequent precedence, would be a matter of course. The Master of the Rolls, on the other hand, contended first, that he had received his appointment prior to the appointment of the Master of the Horse, and secondly, that as the ancestors had to be baked in order to make the ashes, and the making of the ashes preceded the carting of them away, therefore he, as a baker-master, should precede the carter-master. The Master of the Horse replied, sarcastically, that if the Master of the Rolls should bake his rolls to the same degree of brownness that the ancestors were baked he would find himself much less precedent than subsequent. This remark was fatal to harmony between the two distinguished dignitaries, and so disturbed the mental balance of the Master of the Rolls that he undertook to use his dough-mixer on the Master of the Horse, thus causing the latter to flee into the very arms of the reception committee for protection and for a decision of the question as to which of the two masters was entitled to precede the other at the reception. This started the inquiry among the members of the great

committee as to the nature and application of precedence, as to which question they all appeared to be uninformed. This led to the much more significant inquiry as to the precedence of the various members of the committee over one another.

The discussion was lengthy and heated, but the details of it have not come down to us and it is to be regretted that our readers will be obliged to draw upon their own imaginations for conjectures as to the nature of it. Enough is known, however, to warrant us in saying that in all probability Count Do Little was called upon to decide the much mooted question and restore harmony among the members of the celebrated committee.

CHAPTER VI

ON BRITISH SOIL

After a somewhat boisterous voyage, the "British Lion," with its fifty-some-odd flags and their fifty-some-odd geese perched on the heads of the fifty-some-odd lions, approached the waters of the British Empire, and, to the great joy and delight of Columbiason, the Admiral pointed out to him "Sweaton's Lighthouse," which stood on the highest point of the "Spurn Head," that projected into the North Sea and overlooked the wide mouth of the River Humber, as well as that sea. The head of the house of Columbiason seemed to feel a thrill of inspiration as his mind undertook, in vain, to grasp the vastness of the conjectures open to it on this momentous occasion. To think that he was at last approaching the spot where, deep beneath the surface of the earth, lay, concealed from all the world, the ashes of his ancestors, to be unearthed by his own

hand—the hand of the greatest of their posterity, who should thus be permitted to stand before the people of the whole globe on an equality with those ancestral ashes. The bare thought of this was overpowering to him and contributed to inspire him with confidence and to urge him on to the performance of the pleasant, though arduous duties before him—the work of ancestral excavation.

Finally, the lesser light tower—the survivor of several of the kind erected on the same spot and washed away by the boisterous sea—became clearly visible to the naked eye; and just landward of it might have been seen a row of cottages—the domiciles of a life-saving crew which had often been of the greatest service along that wild coast.

As the "British Lion" motored itself toward a suitable landing place at "Spurn Head," the character of the place and the monotonous view appealed to the sensitive side of Columbiason's nature, and a slight shiver passed up his spinal column as he contemplated the work before him. His eye took in the natural causeway of sand and pebbles connecting the "Spurn

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Head" with the town of Kilnsea; then he turned his gaze northward, along the river Humber, and beheld a great brown expanse of sand and mud, which seemed to stretch as far as the eye could see—sand and mud, sand and mud—a desert indeed, where the only living things were a few sea gulls darting rapidly hither and thither, their white wings flashing by the light of the setting sun, in contrast with the mud and sand-colored shore. The only feature which rendered the scene at all redeemable was the "Spurn Head" itself—a long curved bank thrown up by the sea on the place of a tract of land which had once been destroyed. This, although subject to continual waste by the action of the currents setting along the shore southward, had proven itself sufficiently firm to support the two lighthouses, the greater one ninety feet high and the lesser one fifty feet high, and approached by a long wooden bridge above the reach of the water. Both of these towers appeared to have been able to defy the forces of their assailants, the river and the sea, and they afforded a contrast, at least, to the surrounding scenery.

The Admiral endeared himself to Columbiason by imparting to him, from his own limited storehouse of knowledge on the subject, some information concerning "Spurn Head." He pointed, by means of the telescope, to the town of Easington, just beyond Kilnsea, and to the great embankment on the margin of the flats between those two places. This bank stretched as far as the eye could see, in a straight line to the east and west, and was covered with patches of sea holly and coarse grass. Its outer slope was composed of loose sand, falling away to the damp line, beyond which nothing appeared but mud. A few fishermen were seen wading in huge boots across this flat from their boats, and the Admiral explained that it was necessary for them to dig down several feet to find holding ground for their anchors.

To convey to Columbiason some idea as to the extent of "The Spurn," as it was sometimes called, the Admiral informed him that it then contained only about twenty-five acres of earth, mud and sand, including the sand-bank by which it was approached, but way back in the year

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1817 it comprised nearly one hundred acres; that the town of Ravensner was at one time within and near "Spurn Head," and in 1305 that town had sent members to Parliament, but about the year 1340, the dead were transferred to Easington and the town of Ravensner was abandoned and swept away by the flood of the sea.

This information somewhat discouraged Columbiason, and he inquired of the Admiral if he thought the ashes of his ancestors could by any possibility have been transferred to Easington with the dead of Ravensner. The Admiral replied that, while that might have been possible, it was scarcely probable; and he set the mind of Columbiason at rest on that score by informing him that, while the currents of the river and the sea had subjected "Spurn Head" to continual waste, that waste was constantly more or less repaired by new materials which those currents brought from the cliffs that underwent destruction farther north, and that it was out of the ruins of Holderness that "The Spurn" was really constituted and maintained. The Admiral also suggested that the ashes of the illustrious ancestors of

Columbiason might have formed a portion of that new material; that if so, "Spurn Head" was the place to dig for them.

By this time, the "British Lion" had been made fast to its moorings and Columbiason, after giving orders to the proper official to have the great urn landed and delivered to him when he should send for it, threw the silver shovel and pick over his shoulder and mounted the gang-plank, preparatory to placing his feet on British soil, when he discovered a rather portly looking gentleman, with a full face, flushed almost to the redness of a nearly scarlet-colored coat which he was wearing. The portly gentleman was watching with interest the movements of Columbiason, and before the latter could get an opportunity to salute him, he exclaimed, with an exuberant flush of apparent indignation, that he was the owner of that land and it would be interesting to him to know why such a formidable looking vessel was landed there without his permission or authority?

Columbiason was naturally not a little abashed at the sudden and unexpected inquiry, but he quickly regained his self-possession and replied that he was Colum-

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biason, the son of Columbia, and was in search of the tomb of Columbida, of the order of "Insessores," which tomb he had been informed was somewhere on "Spurn Head."

The gentlemen in red responded, gruffly, that he was not familiar with the order of "Insessores," although he had an indistinct recollection of the family of "Columbidæ," but he knew positively that there was no tomb of that family at "Spurn Head;" that the oldest monument on "The Spurn" was Sweaton's Lighthouse—the ninety feet high tower, which was erected in the year 1776; and if the tomb of the Columbidæ were there at all it must have been long before that year, which would probably cause it to be many feet under the sand and mud.

Of course, Columbiason did not mind the number of feet down, where the ashes of his ancestors might be reposing, for he felt confident that he could bring them to the surface if he could but locate them, and he expressed as much to the gentleman in red, stating, at the same time, that he was quite enthusiastic in his desire to locate this tomb of his ancestors, strongly

emphasizing the word ancestors, so that the gentleman in red might appreciate the fact that he owned those ancestors, if they *were* on foreign soil. This, however, had a different effect on the gentleman in red than Columbiason had expected, tending to make him feel as if it were said in a spirit of menace; and he frankly told the would-be intruder that if he approached his shores in anything like the spirit manifested by him in 1776—the year that Sweaton's Lighthouse was erected, and a year with which both the would-be intruder and the gentleman in red were familiar—he would be obliged to insist on his pulling in the lines and floating seaward; that if, on the other hand, Columbiason had come in a spirit of supplication, to recover the ashes of his ancestors, he would be glad to listen to him and to render any assistance possible toward getting those ashes out of the country.

Columbiason apologized to the gentlemen in red for his unintended rudeness and replied that he had no idea of seizing by force, the ashes of his ancestors; and he assured the gentleman in red, most positively, that he did not harbor the spirit

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which actuated him in 1776 and stated that he would be under lasting obligations to that gentleman if he would only extend to him the privilege of stepping his foot on British soil and digging a little in the sand and mud. Of course "John Bull"—for that was the name of the gentleman in red—readily assented to this suppliant appeal, and Columbiason descended the gang-plank of the "British Lion" and extended his hand to his newly found friend, who introduced himself (as Columbiason's mind had been so much occupied in matters at home that he had forgotten all about him).

The two former antagonists soon became quite friendly, indeed chummy, and were calling each other John and Col., as if they had always been on terms of the most cordial and friendly relations. John marvelled, somewhat, at the unprecedeted delay on Col.'s part in seeking to obtain possession of the ashes of his ancestors, and he remarked that, but for the establishment of such friendly relations, such laches would have been regarded as a bar to their removal from his country. Col. seemed to appreciate

that fact and explained to John that he was getting along so well without the ashes that he had quite forgotten their importance, if not their very existence; but having acquired pretty much everything he desired, and having a little leisure time on his hands, he strolled to a certain lake on his estate, where he made the acquaintance of a distant relation, who reminded him of the importance of the search which had brought him to "Spurn Head." John laughed quite heartily and remarked, incidentally, that "Satan always found plenty of work for idle hands to do," much to Columbiason's discomfort. At this juncture John happened to glance up at the fifty-odd flags, floating in the breeze from the masts of the "British Lion," and, noticing the fifty-odd geese perched on the fifty-odd lions' heads, he inquired as to the meaning of the emblem. Columbiason, pleased with the attention which his friend gave to his ensigns, as well as with their own attractiveness, informed him that they were his coat-of-arms. This afforded another opportunity for John to show his mirthfulness, and, good naturedly punching Col. in the side with his thumb, he re-

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marked that it was a good thing for that goose that he was up and away from the jaws of the lion. Columbiason, of course, felt it his duty to laugh because John laughed, which was quite in accord with the actions of his whole household, and the two friends locked arms and strolled toward Sweaton's Lighthouse, where, after a few more exchanges of courtesies, they separated in mutual good humor; and Columbiason, eager to commence the work of excavation while the tide was low, walked some distance from the lighthouse; then, throwing down the shovel and the pick, he signalled for the urn, which was soon by his side, and he was left alone to delve in the mire of the past.

CHAPTER VII

AT THE GRAVE OF HIS ANCESTOR

The luminous king of day had long since kissed the sea good night; nor was there the faintest reflection of his rays remaining upon the tiny windows of the few little cottages standing back on the mud and sand, when Columbiason drove the silvery pick-axe deep into British soil, composed of like mud and sand, in or under which lay, as he supposed, his ancestor's ashes, waiting to burst forth and spread themselves over posterity's mantles, to which they were expected to stick like porous plasters and render impervious to the principles of equality.

As Columbiason raised the pick from the soil, the mud and sand trickled from its silvery point to mingle in fellowship with its companion soil. Again the pick sank low into the muddy, sandy soil and again it brought to the surface of the dreary, desolate shore another reminder of the

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adhesive quality of fellowship, even among the atoms of inanimate sand and mud; for again was welcomed back to earth the falling companions which trickled from the point of the silvery pick. And so the pick went on, finally in fellowship with the shovel, picking and digging until a gauzy, overshadowing mist began to settle along the shore and rise to meet, in bonds of fellowship, the moisture of the falling dew. The stars of heaven were mingling their soft and brilliant lights in unison and blinking their eyes at one another and grinning, in pleasing smiles of fraternal merriment. The queen of night, peeping her silvery head from behind the sea, in playful peekaboo with all the things of earth, greeted all alike with a friendly smile and then, rising up, up, up above their heads, reflected forth on all, without distinction, the pale silvery light of her beaming face. Even the soft sea waves chased one another upon the shore in playful, friendly sport, with no feeling of egotistical superiority pent up within their pure white bosoms. But Columbiason, the son of Columbia, worked on, picking and digging, picking and digging, in the vain effort to

extract from mud and sand the essence of a superior greatness.

He had succeeded in excavating the muddy soil to a depth of about three feet, when his pick struck a substance of stony hardness, causing an echo to voice itself, as if from a distant hill. Standing to his thighs in the mud and sand, he felt the shock of the mighty blow and heard the noise of the collision and of the resounding echo. Leaving his pick in touch with the adamantine substance, he wiped the perspiration from his brow and peered out upon the deep, broad expanse, but he detected nothing but the bosom of the sea, heaving sighs, as it were, of half suppressed grief and laughter; then, returning to his task, he removed the pick-axe and, with the shovel, pushed back the loose mixture of more solid earth and sand, when, to his amazement, he discovered, by the use of a small lantern which had been brought to him with the urn, the end of a flat stony surface, resembling the cover or slab of a sort of sarcophagus. Under the edge of this cover he managed to drive the end of his pick; then after clearing away with his shovel the remaining soil from the top

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of the slab, he succeeded, by a mighty effort, in prying the slab from its position; and upon raising it, there was revealed to him, to his great joy and delight, a receptacle of ashes.

Columbiason, on perceiving the receptacle of ashes, grabbed from the mud and soil, which he had removed from the hole or grave in which the ashes lay, a handful of the yellow mixture and, pressing it to his lips, exclaimed aloud:

“Let me kiss the earth that has for so many ages protected the ashes of mine ancestors and now restores them to me as an emblem of my greatness!”

Then carefully laying the handful of soil back upon the pile from which he had removed it, he addressed the sarcophagus of ashes thus:

“O ashes of mine ancestors! Let me kneel to ye! I will breathe into ye the revivifying principles of your own posterity and bring ye forth a living entity, to move and breathe and have your being again! Ye shall again walk the earth arm in arm with your posterity, for whom ye shall proclaim preferment here and testify to coming ages of his greatness; nor shall ye ever

again depart the realm in which your name in memory alone, has heretofore been cherished!"

After thus addressing the ancestral ashes, Columbiason placed his knees upon the slab, which he had slid back from the stony receptacle, and knelt partially over the casket of ashes, when lo! a great black cloud, which seemed to rise suddenly up from the sea, obscured the misty light of the moonbeams and left the scene in utter darkness. Even the light of the lantern, if it was not entirely extinguished, failed to show itself, and a death-like stillness seemed to reign—such stillness that, when Columbiason arose from the sarcophagus, the very shuffle of his knees and feet upon its slab sounded in his ears in the still gloom, like a distant cataract; then, as he stood quietly and gazed out into the black abyss, the stillness became even more marked, and a terrible feeling of awe seemed to take possession of him. Suddenly, the darkness began to dissipate and a glimmering light appeared to penetrate through the jet-black cloud. Lighter and lighter it became, and the more the brilliancy manifested itself to Columbiason,

the more he gazed into it, as if to relieve his eyes from the strain due to the inky blackness, into which he had been staring; and he finally found himself gazing into the beautiful face of a woman—a face into which the light had apparently become imperceptibly transformed, although the light was really the reflection from the facial vision. Columbiason fell upon his knees, his left arm thrown back and his right hand shading his eyes, as he continued to gaze upon the beautiful face before him, when suddenly a voice, pure, beautiful and sonorous, though feminine, exclaimed:

“Columbiason! Why dost thou bow thy forehead to the dust of ages? Thine ancestors were begotten of the spirit, not of the flesh! Thou wilt find them in thine own heart! Search there for the true and the good—the grand principles there implanted in thy youth!”

The words at first seemed to sink deep into Columbiason’s mind, but in an instant the impression made upon him wore away, and jumping to his feet he exclaimed, still gazing on the beautiful face as he pointed to the sarcophagus:

"NAV! NAV! I SPURN THREE WOMAN!"



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"Mine ancestors lie here; nor go I hence without their valued ashes, for 'tis for these I came hither! Why comest thou here to fret my soul into uneasiness? I know thee not!"

"Know me not?" replied the voice. "Thou dost remember but illy! 'Twere well to keep thy mind fresh-blooming with thoughts of home, lest thou forget the very hills and valleys of thy youth and return thither a wanderer in a strange land!"

"Woman, who art thou?" cried Columbiason, in a stentorian and commanding tone of voice.

"I am Columbia, thy mother!" replied the voice. "I came," it continued, "to return thee to thyself and to thine obligations, lest thou forget the one and overlook the other, to thy misfortune!"

Columbiason, in half anger and half despair, cried:

"Nay, woman, 'tis false! My mother cometh not so far to chide her son at the very grave of his ancestors! Nay! Nay! I spurn thee, woman! 'Tis but a dream—a dream, I say! Depart and leave me to my soul's content!"

Having thus addressed the facial vision,

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Columbiason fell on the stony slab like one in a swoon, and the bright, beautiful face in the heavens became obscured by the cloud of inky blackness which again spread itself over the deep.*

The moon in good time peeped through the interstices of the inky cloud at the fallen hero of his own delusion, as if afraid to disturb his rest within the silent grave, and then she hid her face and peeped again until Columbiason came to, opened his eyes and arose from the slab; then she showed her full face from behind the cloud and found herself a welcome guest indeed.

Columbiason looked, first at the moon, then at the sarcophagus of ashes, as if to convince himself that he was really in the presence of both. He then stooped to

*The fact that Columbiason spurned his mother at "The Spurn," as it is sometimes called, has led to the belief on the part of many persons, that "Spurn Head" is indebted to that event for its name; in this, however, they are in error, as "Spurn Head" existed by that name long before the happening of this event, which must have been a mere coincidence; although it has been suggested that an ancient prophecy may have foretold the event, and that the place took its name in advance of the fulfillment of that prophecy. This is mere conjecture; for there is no absolute evidence of such a prophecy.

raise the slab from the coffin-like receptacle of the ashes when the old clock in the belfry of the little church at Easington struck twelve. The sound of the strokes could be plainly heard, as they resounded through the silent night; and Columbiason, relinquishing, for the time, his desire to lift the slab, arose from his stooping posture to count them one by one. Then all was still again, save the sounds of the crying sea-birds and the gentle washing of the incoming tide-waves upon the desolate shore.

Columbiason, after the bell had ceased striking, wiped the cold perspiration from his brow, and said: "Methinks I hear the sighing of the ghosts of mine ancestors! Nay! 'tis but the washing of the waves upon the sandy shore and the screeching of the sea-birds in the air!" Then, turning his face toward the moon, he addressed it thus:

"Were it not for thee, O moon, I fear me much I would forget my task and forever leave this barren soil. But no! I stand alone with the ashes of mine ancestors. Let me kneel again and behold

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them in the silent tomb, peacefully resting after the cessation of an active living existence. Ah, could I but breathe into these ashes life and feel the beating of an ancient heart and the heaving of a bosom, armored as of yore, my very soul would dance in joyful glee and bid, at last, mine ancestors walk with me!"

The son of Columbia then knelt again by the sarcophagus of ashes and, inhaling a deep breath of the sea air, said: "I welcome thee, healthful breeze, to my fevered lungs! I will inhale thee pure and breathe thee forth and oft inhale again!" Then he returned his gaze to the stony casket, and, whether purposely or not, breathed upon the ashes, when he thought he saw them move. Drawing his head suddenly back from the casket he exclaimed, aghast: "They move!" Then addressing the ashes, he exclaimed, "Are ye then immortal, O ye ashes of the past? Yes; I will breathe once more!" He then inhaled another breath, which he breathed gently forth upon the ashes and exclaimed: "See! They move again! They take on form! At times methinks I even see thy

cold lips move! Speak! Speak! I say!
Why should I shrink from this phantom
of mine ancestors, exhumed from a dreary
tomb? Arise! Let me touch and handle
thy sepulchral clay!"

To Columbiason's great surprise a gaunt, nude and ghost-like figure of a man arose from the sepulchre and stood before him, just above the excavation in which he was kneeling. Jumping to his feet and standing in the tomb, buried nearly to his waist, he stared at the figure in amazement and horror; then he exclaimed: "Why comest thou to me naked? Thou art but an effigy of mine ancestor!"

A voice replied: "'Tis not my wish, but thine, that I am here, and howsoever thou wouldest have me clothed, so be it; for thou shalt clothe thine ancestor after thine own mind. I come to thee as thou hast found me. Make me as thou wilt!"

Columbiason replied: "Thou art an ancient ancestor, and to my coat-of-arms thou must conform! Thy person, nude and lean, an ancient armor coat-of-mail must wear, with hinges rusty on thine elbows and thy knees, from age. Thy

head must of the lion and the bird partake,
and must a helmet wear; and by thy side
a rusty sword must hang, with scabbard,
also rusty made by age. Thy hand must
hold an ancient spear with spearhead
rusty from decay, and on thine arm a
shield. In fact, O Ancestor, I would have
thee perfect as of yore!"

Immediately the ghost-like figure became armored after Columbiason's desire, and stood before him, an image after his own mind. The head was that of a goose, with lion's mane, and on the crown was a small helmet, conforming proportionately as to size.

There stood the figure, perfectly motionless, as if awaiting orders to move; then it exclaimed:

"And this is all I ever left to my posterity!"

"Nay!" cried Columbiason. "Hast thou no virtues?"

"Virtues come not from the grave. They are living things. Thou hast not imparted virtues to my soul!" replied the armored figure.

"Why shouldst I to thee give virtues,

knight, that to posterity I must bequeath?" inquired Columbiason.

"I need not thy virtues in my tomb!" exclaimed the knight.

"Nor do I need thine own!" replied Columbiason.

"True! Thou canst get on well without them!" responded the knight.

"Then come! Let us not tarry longer here! The tide mounts high and soon thy grave will be inundated by the water from the sea! Let us move hence!" said Columbiason.

"Then, ere I move these knees, oil must thou get without delay; for thou hast made my joints as if solidified from the rust of ages," replied the armored petrified ashes of the past.

Columbiason stood aghast! The tide was nearly high and close upon him; the rising clouds and mist had quite obscured the face of the moon, and his ancestor could not move an inch. He might have carried the ghost without difficulty, possibly, but after loading it down with a mass of rusty armor-plate, he felt that a struggle was imminent. The tide had now reached the edge of the grave; the grave-digger had

climbed out upon the mud and sand and stood by the side of his ancestor in the now abysmal darkness, with no effulgent light from the face of his mother, whom he had spurned, to make his pathway clear. In the mean time, the "British Lion," from the swell of the sea, heaved and heaved at the moorings a considerable distance away; and the Admiral, who had not slept a wink, was pacing the deck in a state of anxiety, wondering whether or not to start out upon the muddy soil in search of the distinguished absentee.

To have to struggle with one's ancestors is bad enough at any time, but to struggle with them in pitchy darkness is immeasurably worse; and Columbiason found himself in a dilemma from which he could, for a time, see no way to extricate himself. The ancestor was absolutely helpless, and instead of becoming an aid, in the nature of which most people regard their ancestors, he was a positive burden. Then, too, the horrible thought suggested itself to Columbiason that he might have to bear this burden during the remainder of his life, and it was with difficulty that he

succeeded in getting rid of such a suggestion.

But the first thing to be accomplished was the removal of his ancestor from the sepulchre of its former ashes, and there was no time to be lost; for, even while Columbiason stopped to ponder over the burdensome thoughts that beset him, the cruel sea washed upon and completely covered the sepulchre, although in the blackness of the night there was nothing to indicate the inundation but the gurgling of the water, as it filled the excavation and the empty sarcophagus with its pure white foam.

Columbiason, on hearing the noise of the gurgling, foaming sea, grabbed his armor-plated ancestor at the instant that the briny waters of the sea dashed into the grave, and, by a herculean effort, succeeded in bearing, or rather pushing, that worthy, by a system of lifts and jumps, farther upon the shore; then placing himself back to back with his prize, he endeavored successfully to raise it sufficiently high from earth to permit him to bear it, a little at a time, in a direction,

he knew not where, except that he was sure it was somewhere on "Spurn Head," and a little farther from the sea, whose roarings now appeared more distant. He then placed his ancestor firmly on his feet and seated himself on the sand for a moment to rest. As he did so he caught a glimpse of a little red light, which he knew came from a lantern suspended from a mast of the "British Lion." His heart would have increased its beatings from very joy at the sight of a light of any kind, but he regarded the little red light as a beacon-light of hope, greater than one feels after a long absence from home and a strong probability of a speedy home-coming; for he felt as if he were suddenly lifted from the tomb and borne aloft from a shore most dreary and desolate. The little light indeed gave him renewed courage, and he arose quickly and impulsively from the sand and, seizing his ancestor again, as if it were a criminal in the hands of a deputy sheriff, he yanked it around and for the second time, placing its back against his own, raised its feet from the sand and mud and struggled along, stopping not until

he had reached the shore end of the gang-plank of the "British Lion;" then, weary and exhausted from fatigue, he dropped his ancestor upon its feet with such force that it staggered and would have fallen, had not the Admiral, who was on the shore about to start in search of the missing posterity, grabbed it by its armor-plate and left it standing firmly on its feet again.

As Columbiason leaned against the hand-bar of the gang-plank in an endeavor to catch his breath, the Admiral, after expressing his delight at beholding his master again safe and sound, offered to have the statue, as he called it, carried up the plank and safely stowed away on board of the "Lion" craft, but Columbiason would not listen to such a proposition, saying that it was difficult enough for the Admiral to bear his own burdens and he would not think of imposing his burdensome ancestor on others. So saying, back to back once more with his ancestral prize, he bore it up the gang-plank and to his own cabin, aft of the stately craft, where he once more stood it on its feet; then, seating himself on a downy couch, he wiped

the sweat beads from his massive brow and addressed his ancestor thus:

"O ancestor! I have rescued thee from thine ashy tomb and brought thee forth, a burden to my very soul. Thou art, no doubt, a lord, or perhaps, a duke"—

"Whate'er thou wilt—a baron, if 'twill suit thee best!" interrupted the ancestor.

"Even so, as I have taken thee from barren soil," ejaculated Columbiason. "Yet," he continued, "what profiteth it me to sweat and toil for thee?"

"It is thy choice," replied the ancestor, "to be my willing slave, to clothe and feed me and to give me virtues which possess I not. This very sword and spear—aye, and all this coat-of-mail and shield, though stained with blood of innocence, thou wouldest exhibit to thy friends and exalt me high for valiant deeds of yore! No such deeds hast thou e'er performed, nor knowest thou; yet thou wouldest steal my thunder from the ancient past and make it thine!"

"Thou art but mad!" cried Columbiason, arising hurriedly to his feet, in a state of agitation. "I knew not of thy deeds, nor

brought them forth to make them mine! I pretend not to virtues or achievements which possess I not!"

"Then tell me," said the armored baron, "why thou didst bring me here? The last I saw, when from this mortal sphere I took my leave," he continued, "were plains and hills and valleys, barren but for straw-thatched cottages and mammoth trees, with distant castles here and there, of which a single one I owned. I see them now, with all the bloody deeds done in the past to 'pease my wrath and make me great; yet thou wouldest torment my soul and hold me fast encased in rusty armor which I cannot move, to 'pease thy vanity and thy pride!"

Columbiason looked intently upon the speaking effigy of his hopes, eagerly catching each word it uttered; then stepping back, he exclaimed in a tone indicating solicitude for his own welfare:

"If thou couldst walk as thou canst talk, I fear me thou wouldest free thyself at my expense! 'Tis well thy lion's head has but a goose's jaw! At gentle intervals shall I lubricate thy joints lest thou forget thy present dignity and, wan-

dering in the past, now restain thine arms
with the blood of thy posterity!"

"Fear not!" replied the ancient baron.
"If thou but speak the word, back to their
resting-place mine ashes shall return, my
soul to leap and walk again amidst the
scenes of yore!"

"Nay! Nay! Sir knight, or duke, or
baron that thou art, I pray thee stay!"
cried Columbiason, kneeling before his an-
cestor. "I need thee and thy coat-of-mail
and all thy deeds! I swear that I will treat
thee well, nor quarrel with thee more!"
Then arising from his kneeling position,
he said "Come! Thou needest rest! Thou
shalt recline upon this very couch in sweet
repose until the sun is high."

So saying, Columbiason again embraced
his ancestor, and by another series of lifts
and jumps, managed to lay the iron-bound
baron upon the couch; then, overcome
from the long and weary hours of excite-
ment and exertion, he sank into an easy
chair and soon fell fast asleep.

Thus we will leave the "British Lion"
and its precious freight, and return to
record the doings of Madam Columbiana
and the committee of reception.

CHAPTER VIII

THE AMERICAN NOBILITY

Soon after the departure of Columbiason for the distant shore of his ancestors, Madam Columbiana summoned to her presence in the Columbiason mansion, the members of the reception committee and the distinguished knights, masters, keepers, comptroller, equerries, etc., for a general understanding and conference as to their various duties, of which she was, of course, ignorant, not having been used to such things; but she did not desire to expose her ignorance to Count Do Little, so she concluded not to request his appearance at the conclave, which was to be held in the grand drawing-room of the palace.

Of course, Madam Columbiana knew it would not do to assemble the various dignitaries of the creation of the heads of the House of Columbiason, clad in the ordinary costumes of the day; nor could

she, with propriety, appear before those dignitaries in such ordinary apparel. She had learned a few things from her husband before he took his departure for the mud and sand of "Spurn Head." One of these things was, to properly bedeck herself on all august occasions, and another thing was, to require all members of the household, as well as all dignitaries, to be announced in due form before they appeared before her. She, therefore, prepared herself accordingly, and issued instructions to have all the various household "officials" and the members of the reception committee announced to her separately; and she particularly required that all of those dignitaries should be clad in costumes becoming their various stations.

The time finally arrived for the meeting of the conclave, and the two dancing popinjays formally announced the various arrivals in good style and danced and scraped, as they backed themselves out of the grand entrance of the drawing-room to prepare for ushering the next arrival into the presence of "Her Madamhood."

Madam Columbiana was handsomely costumed in a long, trailing gown of a sort of brick-red color, with a bodice of the cross-bars of the English flag. She appeared quite attractive to the august spectators, whose salutations she was pleased to return in a manner that tended to bring her gorgeousness more particularly to their attention.

The members of the reception committee wore knee breeches and "claw-hammer" coats, exposing white shirt fronts, on which were conspicuously displayed cross-bars of the English flag. Their shoes were low cut, with silver buckles and black ribbon ties.

The Knight-Commander of the Bath wore knee breeches made of coarse toweling, and a short, white coat, cut round-about. On his shirt front was a cake of soap, as a stud, and on his shoes, in the place of silver buckles, he wore good-sized though neatly arranged sponges. He was dignified, in a manner becoming his station. His sleeves were rolled up, as if he were ready for action, and he appeared to win the esteem of all the members of

the distinguished council by his dignified bearing.

The Master of the Rolls was attired in a becoming suit of white duck trousers, cut straight across at the knees, from which were suspended white stockings, held in position by equally becoming ribbons of white satin, in the nature of garters, which were delicately bowed with safety-pins. His shoes, or rather, slippers, were also white, and, in the place of silver shoe-buckles, he wore something resembling delicately baked rolls. On his shirt-front he wore a similar roll as a stud, and also, a like roll as a top-knot on his head. His coat was white, with sleeves, cut somewhat after Chinese fashion, but not quite so long, thus exposing the larger portion of his arms, which had been made snowy white by means of some kind of powder resembling flour.

The Knight of the Garter wore a red coat, the sleeves of which were made of garters of various colors, neatly sewed together, and growing smaller at the wrists. His trousers were made of garters after the fashion of the sleeves and came to a

point just above the knees, where they were loosely banded. Around his waist was a handsome garter-like belt, with a buckle on the side, and drawn sufficiently tight to permit the lower portion of the coat to project below the hips, after the fashion, somewhat, of an ancient hoop-skirt—an effect very pleasing to the eye, and certainly attractive. His slippers were of red kid, with black garter buckles.

The Keeper of the Seal wore a seal-skin cape, tight, red knee breeches, with small seal-skin caps over the knees, and tight skin-colored stockings, with small, delicate seal-skin caps suspended from the ankles over a beautifully polished black shoe.

The Comptroller of the Household wore a handsome collar, made of a large tin pan, from the centre of which was delicately cut a hole, through which his head had been gently protruded. Numerous tin handles had been carefully soldered on to the pan and hung gracefully over his shoulders; and to make the attire uniform in that particular, similar polished tin pans and handles were neatly fitted over

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the knees and ankles of this dignitary. The coat was of a loosely-cut pliable fabric, resembling "circus cloth," if there is such a thing; and the effect of the whole costume, under a brilliant electric light, can well be imagined. Indeed, for brilliancy the attire of the Comptroller of the Household surpassed the costumes of any thus far referred to.

The Knight-Bachelor was simply a bald-headed man, dressed in an ordinary black suit, with full flowing trousers and patent leather shoes.

The Knight of the Thistle looked the costume to perfection—simply thistles, but no brilliancy.

The Equerry and the Extra Equerry were dressed alike. Their blond hair flowed over their shoulders, which were covered by leather capes; and they wore top boots, into which were tucked, from the knees down, their trousers, made of similar substance.

Of course, none of our readers will be sacrilegious enough to laugh at the description of any of these costumes when they stop to consider the fact that the scene

was in the United States, and that none of the distinguished personages who wore the costumes was acquainted with the high duties of the office which he was so suddenly called upon to fill; and also, that the attire of every one had to be conceived in the brains of each for the particular occasion, and expressed his idea, as near as possible, of the nature of the business into which he was about to embark.

The Master of the Horse was ushered into the presence of Madam Columbiana with so much pomp by the two popinjays—due, possibly, to his gorgeous wearing apparel—that he was, at first, quite overcome by the dignity of the occasion, but on regaining himself, he seemed to feel, more than ever, his dignity and to make himself conspicuously pompous. His attire consisted of a jockey-like green-colored coat and breeches, the latter of which were cut across just above the knees, nearly up to which rose, like an eight-inch stove-pipe, the legs of a mammoth pair of boots, on the heels of which were spurs nearly a half of a yard in length. Over these spurs, the two lackey-like popinjays

kept tripping, as Master Michael Mullettooney (for that was the name of the Master of the Horse) strutted around.

As the said ushers finished their escorting duties and attempted to make their bowing and dancing exit from the presence of the great assemblage, the Master of the Horse, in attempting to turn to salute Her Madamhood, inadvertently rendered the occasion less dignified by causing his long spurs to come into collision with the shins of the said two gentlemen ushers, thus precipitating those worthies to the mosaic floor, amid a suppressed laughter of all the dignitaries present, except the Master of the Rolls, who laughed loud and boisterously, much to the annoyance of the Master of the Horse. In fact, he laughed so heartily that the rolls fell from his shoes and his knee-caps and exhibited themselves rolls indeed, by rolling on the floor. This caused an outburst of laughter on the part of the Master of the Horse, partly because it struck him as a worthy cause for hilarity, and partly in reciprocation for the previous open breach of propriety on the part of his former rival in prece-

dency. Not a word was spoken by any one, of course, but the antics of the two masters, in their masterly endeavor to stifle their indignation and apparent animosity toward each other, might have been quite amusing to an outsider.

It was some little time before complete quiet was restored, nor would calmness have reigned even then had not the said ushers suddenly appeared and announced the last distinguished arrivals — the "Knights of the Fleece," who were soon escorted in a body before Madam Columbiana by the Master of Ceremonies, who was clad in a gorgeous purple gown, and who held in his hand a sort of wand as a symbol of authority, or assumed power, over the assemblage.

Madam Columbiana saluted the knights as "Most Worthy Knights of the Fleece!" and all eyes were naturally turned to them, for they really represented the wealth of the nation; and to a close observer, no little amount of envy and jealousy might have been noticeable on the part of the less prominent persons present; but this was merely an exhibition of the human nature side of the disgruntled.

The Knights of the Fleece courteously returned the salutation, through their leader, the Knight of the Golden Fleece, and Madam Columbiana then informed them of the object of the meeting, namely, to initiate the various knights, masters, etc., in the duties of their positions. This announcement appeared to surprise the Knights of the Fleece, who looked at one another in astonishment, and the Knight of the Golden Fleece turned to Her Madamhood and exclaimed, in a stentorian tone of voice: "The Knights of the Fleece understand their business!" The sonorous response rather disconcerted the Madam, as it did the Master of Ceremonies. She, however, immediately regained her self-possession and, apologizing for having inadvertently overlooked the fact of their knowledge in that particular, she stated that she saw no reason for longer detaining them, but, as it was understood that they would all be present at the great reception of the ancestral ashes, she hoped they would not disappoint her. One of the knights responded that, as there was nobody to fleece, he did not see why their

presence should be expected; that there could be nothing gained by fleecing the ancestor of his ashes. The madam agreed with the worthy knight in this, although she had her doubts that they would leave anything untouched that happened to come within reach of their grasping fingers. She suggested, however, that to lend dignity to the occasion, the "Knights-Fraternal" make it convenient to waive every other consideration and appear at the reception. To this they consented, and after making the usual formal courtesies to Her Madam-hood, they turned on their heels, and, headed by the two master-ushers, made their exit from the room, much to the gratification of the envious dignitaries who remained.

Detailed descriptions of dress are usually wearisome, and it is not our intention to burden our readers with such descriptive matter; but the unusual attire of the Knights of the Fleece on this occasion will, no doubt, render a brief description of it interesting, and we therefore give it.

The knights were headed by the Knight of the Golden Fleece, who was most gorgeously "caparisoned," we might say, in

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a costume bespangled with gold coins of every description, linked together in such a way as to obscure every other part of his attire. On his head he wore a cap of American gold eagles, coins which he had captured, or of which he had fleeced the many whom he thought not entitled to them. His feet were clad in golden shoes, and in his hand he held a golden sceptre.

The Knight of the Steely Fleece was clad similarly to the Knight of the Golden Fleece, except that his apparel was of polished steel, and on his feet were iron shoes, while in his hand he held a sceptre of polished steel. On his head he wore a cap of American eagles made of steel instead of gold, into which they had not yet been transformed.

The Knight of the Icy Fleece was handsomely attired in a coat-of-mail, made of brilliant material resembling ice, cut in cubes, and so arranged that they did not move, except when this icy knight moved. The covering to the legs was of the knee-breeches pattern, composed of the same apparently icy material, cut in like cubes, and his stockings, although composed of the

same icy-looking material, had the appearance of icicles, hanging closely together. On his head was a cap, from which icicles hung to his shoulders, and on his feet were shoes resembling ice-cakes. In his hand he held a sceptre of ice, resembling a large icicle.

The Knight of the Glassy Fleece was costumed in beautiful cubes and hexagon and octagon-shaped glasses of every imaginable color, extending clear to his ankles, over which he wore small concave pieces of glass, resembling electric-light shades. On his head he wore a cap made after the pattern of a handsome lamp-shade, with a lamp-chimney protruding from the centre. He held in his hand a sceptre of glass of various colors. The effect of the electric lights upon the knights of the icy and glassy fleece was simply indescribable.

The knight of the Coaly Fleece wore a costume of variously cut substance resembling coal, polished like black diamonds. On his head he wore a cap, made cube-like, and also polished like a piece of jet. His shoes were, also, of jet-black substance with large square toes. In his hand he held a sceptre of coal.

The Knight of the Raily Fleece wore a high hat resembling the smoke-stack of a locomotive, and on his breast was a locomotive head-light. His sleeves resembled locomotive drivers, and on the side of each knee was a small car wheel. His shoes resembled short pieces of iron rail, on each of which, attached from the ankles, was a small wheel. In his hand he held a sceptre resembling an iron rail.

The Knight of the Briny Fleece wore a cap resembling a small steamship, with small white sails, full set. His breast-plate consisted of a pilot-wheel. With these exceptions he was attired in the garb of a sailor. In his hand he held a telescope as a sceptre.

The Knight of the Cereal Fleece appeared clad in a shock of wheat, bound around his waist, his head protruding above and his arms through it. From the bottom of the shock protruded his legs, which were covered with straw. His cap consisted of a small shock of corn, and in his hand he held a large ear of corn as a sceptre.

The Knight of the Fleshy Fleece wore a cap which resembled a hog's head. On

each shoulder was a small bull's head, with two short horns. His coat consisted of the fleecy hide of a lamb, through numerous holes of which peeped the heads of those innocent creatures. His shoes were ornamented with the heads of two roosters. In his hand he held a sceptre consisting of the long bone of a lamb's leg.

The Knight of the Oily Fleece was attired in a large and beautifully polished oil-can garment as a body, from which thin legs, clad in polished tin, protruded. His cap consisted of a small oil-well pump, with the framework, and in his hand he held a sceptre resembling an oil-pipe tube.

There were a few other Knights of the Fleece who were not present, but there appeared a sufficient number of them to make a formidable body of the craft, and their costumes shone resplendent in the brilliant rays of the electric light. All of the knights were corpulent and appeared to have been well fed, although some appeared more corpulent than others, according to the extent of their fleecing proclivities.

CHAPTER IX

THE FIRST CREATION

After the Knights of the Fleece had taken their departure, Madam Columbiana requested the Master of Ceremonies to proceed with such instructions as might be necessary to insure the success of the reception. The worthy master bowed low and immediately called the meeting to order. He then addressed the antediluvian Pantomime Decanter, as Chairman, or Chief of the Reception Committee, and requested him to call the roll of the Committee and to report as to its efficiency. The great head of the said Committee proceeded to comply with the request, more in a pantomime sort of way than otherwise, on account of his extreme age; and the report being satisfactory, the Committee was excused to await the next summons, and made its exit, headed by its Chief, and conducted by the two usher-dignitaries.

Madam Columbiana then informed the Master of Ceremonies that she had been apprised from a most reliable source that the Equerry and Extra Equerry must be a nobleman; she therefore instructed him to ascertain whether or not the gentlemen appointed to those positions fulfilled the conditions of their appointments in that respect. The Master of Ceremonies took the liberty to reply that the fulfillment of those conditions would necessitate other conditions, requiring all the dignitaries whose horses were entrusted to the equerries to also be noblemen; and as the Republic had thus far possessed itself of foreign noblemen only, and those by marriage with its monachically inclined daughters, he was at a loss to conceive how this was to be effected, because, as he said, the foreign nobles had become partially domesticated by those marriages, and domestic nobles would not answer the purpose of the great Head of the House of Columbiason, who, as he understood, desired to surround himself with only the pure breed.

This important information from the Master of Ceremonies very much embar-

rassed Madam Columbiana, and she regretted that, however much she might expose her ignorance of the subject in hand, she would be obliged to appeal to Count Do Little for assistance in solving the great problem before her. She, therefore, dispatched a messenger for that worthy and genuinely "noble" individual.

The "Count" was soon announced and appeared before Her Madamhood, clad in a short bob-tail coat, with a belt drawn so tight that the bottom of the coat expanded like a pair of small old-fashioned hoops, such as the women used to wear way back in the nineteenth century. His trousers, not being sufficiently long to warrant their being turned up at the bottoms of the legs, had been regulated to drop far enough to enable "His Dignity" to comply with this English "turn-up" custom, thus causing the seat of his trousers to drop considerably below the edge of the bob-tail coat. Of this he was, of course, oblivious, but his appearing thus inartistically clad was the cause of no little amusement among the members of the celebrated "council," into whose presence the count had been ceremoniously conducted by the ushers.

Madam Columbiana informed the Count of her dilemma and implored him to suggest some way in which the difficulty might be overcome, stating at the same time that she was anxious to retain the equerries, in compliance with her husband's especial request so to do. The Count replied that he was an Englishman and loyal to the King, to whom he, as well as all other subjects of his Majesty's realm, had taken the oath of allegiance, and he could not see how such subjects could transfer to a republic such allegiance without relinquishing their rights under His Majesty's dominions. He agreed with the Master of Ceremonies, who was also a British subject, that a foreign nobleman could not be domesticated in a republic merely by marriage, and stated that he felt sure no citizen of a republic could expect him so to be.

The Count then went on to say that he, of course, realized the intensity of the craving of the country of Columbiason for foreign nobles, and that he had no doubt His Majesty would permit as many of those stars of the earth to meteorize through the Republic as might be thought necessary to

meet the requirements of the ladies who desired to follow their trail with matrimonial intentions and, with a view to a permanent location, with their money, on foreign soil, where the money would, of course, readily be domesticated.

Her Madamhood seemed much impressed with what the Count had said, but seemed to think that home nobles might, with propriety, be created to meet the requirements of the special occasion in question, and she took the liberty to inquire of the Count what there was to prevent such creations.

The Count replied that only the *King* could *create*, but she might *appoint* His Majesty's subjects to positions and permit them to call themselves by whatsoever titles they wished, which titles would answer very well in her own country, but would not, of course, be recognized in His Majesty's realm; and he thought that such a proceeding might serve the purpose of the nobility-inclined until the establishment of a permanent "American Nobility," which he thought only a question of a little time, from the way things looked.

Madame Columbiana was exceedingly

gratified to learn of her nobility-appointing powers and at once dispatched the Master of Ceremonies for her "crown"—an ornamental top-piece which she had made to be worn on the occasion of her husband's coming creation of "lord" by the great English monarch, which event she knew, of course, would soon follow the return of Columbiason from "Spurn Head."

In good time the Master of Ceremonies appeared, carrying the "crown" and preceded by the two lackey-like ushers, while two pages followed, holding the Master's train. He approached Her Madamhood and extended both of his hands, holding the crown, which she grasped with the greatest avidity, and placing it on her head, she arose with pompous dignity. Then, glancing at the British subjects before her, she overlooked the little matter of Democratic propriety, in her anxiety to perform the needful appointing ceremony, and saluted all present as "My Subjects!" To this they all took exception by exclaiming in unison "O——!" Her Madamhood at once took notice of their dissatisfaction and corrected herself by saying, "Pardon me—I meant my subjects by *appointment*."

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This only brought forth another evidence of dissatisfaction on the part of those present by their instant exclamation "No! No!" much to the embarrassment of the appointing power, who again corrected herself by exclaiming, "Again I most humbly beg the pardon of my subjects—I mean of my friends—I meant to say My Employees by Appointment!" This seemed to satisfy all of the dignitaries, who bowed low, in recognition of their subordination.

Her Madamhood then, addressing her "Employees by Appointment," informed them of the state of ecstatic bliss in which she had been permitted to find herself on being the first and only American on whom the honor had fallen to confer, in her own country, the title of "Nobility by Appointment." That she naturally felt no little sense of pride on the occasion, could, she said, be better appreciated by all those present when she informed them that the honor had come to her during the absence in "dear old England" of the Head of the House of Columbiason, who, but for his absence, would, doubtless, have performed the high and honorable duties about to devolve upon her own head.

The Equerry and the Extra Equerry were then summoned before her Madamhood, and she announced to them that, in order for them to properly perform the duties of their offices, the honor had been imposed upon her of appointing them "nobles," and that, after much thought and deliberation, she had concluded to "Count" the Equerry and to "Knight" the Extra Equerry. This announcement brought forth a protest from the Master of the Horse, who suggested to Madam Columbiason that, as he was Master of that animal, he thought he should be first to receive the honor of "titlehood," as he called it, and if not, he should certainly receive a higher title than either of the gentlemen of the equerry persuasion, and not be required to play "second fiddle" to either of them.

To say that Her Madamhood felt chagrined at this unprecedented interruption from Michael Multooney, the Master of the Horse, who had been promoted to his high position from an ordinary groom, would not half express her feelings. However, she was not sure whether the said master or the equerries had precedence under the

English rules; and to title the latter with a superior degree to the former, if they were not entitled to precedence, would, she knew, be a breach which could not well be repaired and would lay her actions open to severe criticism. She was, therefore, again obliged to consult "His Dignity," the Count, who enlightened her on the subject by stating that the Master of the Horse was quite a noted dignitary in His Majesty's realm and preceded even the Master of the Rolls by a considerable degree, as well as the Knights of the Garter, and the sons of viscounts, earls and barons; that even the Secretary of State, if a baron, was preceded by such master; and so far as the Equerry and an Extra Equerry were concerned, they were much below the Master of the Horse in station. He thought, therefore, that it would be proper to first appoint the latter a nobleman and then, unless the Knight of the Garter and the Master of the Rolls objected—which they would have a perfect right to do—the equerries might be given precedence over them; that he thought, however, the rules of precedence should be strictly observed, if possible; for there was

no telling when the Republic would come under the rules, and he thought those rules might as well be familiarized and observed so as to avoid unpleasant conditions in future.

The Count then suggested the propriety of awaiting the return of Columbiason to his native land before the great title-appointing fete should be undertaken, but to this suggestion Madam Columbiana would not listen. The nobility-appointing duty was, she said, a great and responsible one, and she knew that her husband would be too much absorbed in other more important duties on his return to undertake it.

In the mean time the Master of the Horse was getting impatient, if not a little greener from envy, and he took the liberty to state that, from the dignity of his position, he thought he was entitled to the degree of "lord," as he called it.

Madam Columbiana was righteously indignant at this open and daring bid from the master-appointed groom for actual equality with her husband, the great Head of the House of Columbiason, who was to be created such a dignitary on his return by

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His Royal Majesty, the King of Great Britain and Ireland and Emperor of all the Indias, and she informed the Master of the Horse that such preferment for him was entirely out of the question; that there would be but one native "lord" in the Republic, and he would be her own husband, and she regretted that any of her subjects—Employees by Appointment—should be so presumptuous as to demand so high an honor.

After the excitement attending the presumptuous bid for superior honors by the Master of the Horse had subsided, Her Madamhood informed that dignitary that, while she would have the honor of being the nobility-appointing power, *he* also would have the honor of being the first person in the land to receive the appointment of nobleman; and that he should thenceforth be known as "Knight-Master of the Horse," which she thereby appointed him. She then descended from the slightly raised platform on which she was standing, and binding a short sword upon him, she informed him that, in bestowing so great an honor upon him, it became her

painful duty to conform to the ancient custom by smiting him on the cheek, as the last affront which he was ever to receive unrequited. So saying, Her Madam-hood dealt the Knight-Master of the Horse a smart blow on the cheek and told him that he should thenceforth be addressed "Sir Knight," and that his wife should thenceforth be known in the line of precedence as "Dame Mistress of the Horse."

The newly appointed knight then took an oath, by raising his right hand and declaring, in the presence of all the distinguished personages, that he would ever maintain the dignity of his office by the proper protection and care of the horse. He then turned to the Master of Ceremonies and inquired of him wherein he, as the newly appointed Knight-Master of the Horse, was superior to the other knights who were present. The great Master of Ceremonies was, to his joy, relieved of the responsibility of instructing the new knight on that subject, by the Count, who condescended to inform the knight that the horse was the most noble of animals, and that any person who took proper care

of that animal was entitled to be called a nobleman, outside of any appointing or creating power through which he might receive such a title; and also, that the horse was a powerful animal and it required more power to control him than was required by the other knights, who were supposed to know much less than he about the care of horses.

This, coming from the Count, seemed to satisfy the Knight-Master of the Horse, who swung his spurs around and strutted back to his place in the grand assembly as if he were the "most important personage on record," as he was afterwards heard to refer to himself.

In the meantime, the Master of Ceremonies, being somewhat of a poet, had prepared himself with a laurel wreath, which he had kept concealed beneath his gown; and feeling himself on terms with Her Madamhood sufficiently familiar to warrant it, made application for the title of "Poet Laureate," giving as a reason for his request that his position, as Master of Ceremonies, would often necessitate poetical effusions of instantaneous manufacture,

of which he was capable. He also requested that the word "Grand" be added to his title to distinguish him from any assistants which he might be obliged to employ in the performance of his duties. This request was readily granted by Her Madamhood and the said master produced the wreath which she placed upon his head, as she pronounced him "Grand Master of Ceremonies, Poet Laureate," thus gratifying the highest aspirations of that worthy master.

Madam Columbiana then stated that Count Do Little had carefully prepared a "priority" list, which she would read, so that the august assembly might know exactly the line of precedence which each member was to take on all solemn and festive occasions. She then read as follows:

"First in line of precedence, Pantomime Decanter, the Chief or Chairman of the Committee of Receptions, and his Committee.

"Second. The Treasurer of the Household and his wife.

"Third. The Comptroller of the Household and his wife.

"Fourth. The Knight-Master of the Horse and his wife.

"Fifth. The Knight of the Garter and his wife.

"Sixth. The Master of the Rolls and his wife.

"Seventh. The Knight of the Thistle and his wife.

"Eighth. The Knight-Commander of the Bath and his wife.

"Ninth. The Knight-Bachelor.

"Tenth. The Companions of the Bath and their wives.

"Eleventh. Gentlemen and their wives.

"Twelfth. The Equerry and the Extra Equerry."

Her Madamhood then resumed her seat and the "Grand Master of Ceremonies, Poet Laureate," instructed the various dignitaries in the line of their duties; the Treasurer of the Household to take charge of and account for all the funds of the household; the Comptroller of the Household to have charge and control of all the implements, utensils and other necessary kitchen ware and household furniture; the Knight-Master of the Horse to

take charge of and care for the horses of the household; the Knight of the Garter to keep himself well supplied with garters of various descriptions and to supply them on application; the Master of the Rolls to supply rolls to the household, when required. The Knight of the Thistle to keep himself well supplied with thistles of every description, and to supply them when, in his judgment, it should be necessary to do so; the Knight-Commander of the Bath to keep himself well supplied with baths and to furnish them to others when occasion required; the Knight-Bachelor to wait upon the other knights and assist them in the performance of their duties when required; the Equerry and the Extra Equerry to have the care and use of all horses of the nobility as soon as a full line of that article could be decided upon and appointed, which would, the master thought, probably occur after the return to the Republic of the Head of the House of Columbiason. The great master then stated that pending such further appointments, the Equerry and the Extra Equerry would be obliged to care for only the horse in charge

of the Knight-Master of the Horse, who, so far, was the only nobleman in the empire, or rather (correcting himself) in the Republic.

Of course, this announcement caused the Knight-Master of the Horse to realize, more fully than ever, the importance of his position; and, in a manner not less important, he beckoned to the Equerry and his "Extra," around whom, on their appearing before him, he strutted in his long spurs, as he instructed them in the duties which he desired each to perform.

The Grand Master then announced that he would in due time review the assembly, and would duly inform the various dignitaries, before the arrival of Columbiason with the ancestral ashes, when he might be expected, so that they would have ample time to prepare themselves for the great reception.

The two ushers then reappeared and aided the great assembly in making its exit, taking extra precautions to avoid the long spurs of the great Knight-Master of the Horse.

When Madam Columbiana found herself

alone, she removed the crown from her head, and arising, held it before her with an evident feeling of great admiration. She then kissed it and made her exit from the hall in a state of the most exalted satisfaction with herself, and with the manner in which she had fulfilled the great obligations which she had been called upon to perform.

CHAPTER X

THE LETTER TO THE KING

The sun had risen high in the heavens and its golden rays were reflecting themselves through the variegated window-panes of Columbiason's yacht upon his revivified ancestor, who was struggling to arise from the downy couch upon which he had been placed by his most illustrious and modern posterity, when the latter awoke from his peaceful slumber in his easy chair, and after rubbing his eyes, espied his ancestor struggling with himself in a vain effort to arise, as he thought, from his horizontal position.

"Your Grace seemeth to be uneasy; didst thou not rest well?" he inquired of the struggling armor-plate, which was about all he could see of the image.

"Why doth my posterity call me 'Grace'?" inquired the ancestor. "Dost thou think," he continued, "that there is

anything graceful in thine ancestor's being bound in a rusty coat-of-mail and hampered in his attempts to arise to prevent the light of the sun from blinding his eyes?"

"Nay! Be the acts of mine ancestor however disgraceful, he must still be 'Grace,' since custom makes it so," replied Columbiason. "But," he continued, "thy posterity will save thine eyes and ease thy weary bones by standing thee upon thy feet, since a sitting posture thou canst not assume, and he will let thee behold the glory of the sun at longer range, with a shade before thine orbits." Then arising, he grappled with his ancestor once more and succeeded, after considerable difficulty, in placing him upon his feet, the latter still being unable to withdraw his left arm from the heavy, rusty shield, or let go of the spear, which appeared to act as a support to aid him in maintaining a firm, standing position.

"There!" said Columbiason, after beholding his ancestor in good standing with himself, "the centuries of rest which thou hast had will doubtless make thy standing

easy for awhile!" So saying, he sank back into the easy chair from which he had arisen, and facing his ancestor, proceeded to interrogate him thus:

"I have, Your Grace, been ill at ease for some time past, about my family tree; canst thou inform me where it taketh root, that I may know its pedigree?"

The ancestor replied: "When, from yonder distant hills, some centuries since, I took my leave, the family tree—a roosting place for birds—stood towering to the sky; and from its branches, bending low, from weight of many fowl, sweet music came—a pleasure to mine ear—that in me 'woke a spirit of reverence and filled my soul with joy. Yet, 'neath the shadow of that tree, at noon and eventide, I lay and passed the time away in dreams of conquest of my fellow-men, that sped me on, this sword and spear and coat of mail with blood to stain, till in remorse, I asked, in vain, from the shadow of that tree my very soul to free!"

"'Tis well!" said Columbiason, and placing his hand to his brow, he continued: "My ancestor truly corroborates the in-

vestigation of the great college of heraldry. The family tree a roosting place for birds, one of which I am fully persuaded belongs to me—Columbiason—thy posterity—the son of Columbia! Yes; a bird on the limb of a tree! My pedigree is clear, beyond the shadow of a doubt—proven by the very ancestor who owned the tree!” Then arising from his easy chair, Columbiason exclaimed, half to himself and half aloud: “I shall at once type a letter to His Majesty the King of Great Britain and the ‘Emperor of Ireland,’ and of all the Indias, and shall apply for the honor to which I am justly entitled as the posterity of mine ancestor!”

Having thus addressed himself, he courteously thanked his ancestor for the important information which he had imparted and, touching a button, summoned a stenographer, who immediately appeared, and to whom he dictated a long and touching epistle to the British King, the substance of which letter was that, having traced his ancestry and satisfied himself of the validity of his right to title, worthy of his ancestral predomi-

nance, he most respectfully applied for the "position of lord," which position he would be pleased to receive as early as His Majesty's convenience would permit. He begged, however, that His Majesty hasten that convenience by sending the title papers forward by an early mail, in order that he might receive them as early as possible after his return to his own country. After closing his letter with the usual "Your most humble and obedient subject," etc., he touched another button which was answered by a waiter, from whom he ordered breakfast for two.

Just before the breakfast was brought in, Columbiason signed the letter to the king and directed to have it posted at once, so it could be on its way to His Majesty by the time the "British Lion" left the native shore of his ancestor. He then summoned the Admiral and, after introducing him personally to his ancestor, whom, with the consent of that antiquated evidence of former existence, he designated as "Baron Spurn," he gave orders to head the "British Lion" for home and start for that foreign land (as he inadvertently called his country), without delay.

Soon after the Admiral's departure, which happened immediately on the receipt of his orders to weigh anchor, two waiters entered the cabin and took their respective places, one behind Columbiason and the other behind the chair in front of which the ancestor was standing.

Columbiason, soon after the entrance of the waiters, ordered a glass of water, which was brought in by another well-cared-for individual, who before tendering the water, asked for "One dollar!" Columbiason paid the dollar without question and held the glassful of water up as if to inspect it, when his ancestor inquired of him what a dollar was. Columbiason replied that it was a piece of American money, and passing the glass of water to the "Baron," asked him if he would partake of the water.

"Nay! For centuries have I no occasion had to drink, or e'en these hands to wash; nor will I drink, or wash again, methinks, 'till water, like the ancient rills, runs free," replied the ancestor.

This ejaculation must have struck Columbiason as even more ancient than his ancestor, for after a somewhat hearty laugh, he replied:

"The modern rills less freely run; nor yield their waters without pay!"

The attendant then, pointing to the chair in front of the ancestor, asked him if he would be seated.

The ancestor replied: "If thou wilt my joints but lubricate, to seated be I will be pleased!"

At this intimation on the part of the ancestor for sitting honors, another well-cared-for individual appeared and, extending his hand to the ancestor, said, "One dollar!"

"Nay! For centuries have I no occasion had to sit; nor will I sit again 'till sitting room, like the ancient stumps, is free!"

This amused the attendant, who remarked that that was the first century plant he had ever seen in bloom, and it was certainly a blooming idiot, while Columbiason laughed again and exclaimed: "The modern stumps less freely stand; nor yield themselves for sitting without pay."

At that moment, the breakfast was brought in and an attendant appeared for every thing on the table. As Colum-

biason called out the various articles, the attendant or keeper of that article answered "One dollar;" except in the case of steak, which brought forth the demand for "Two dollars!"

Columbiason drew from his pocket a large roll of bills and paid for the breakfast, settling with the keeper of each special article.

The breakfast was then placed before the ancestor and his posterity, when a portly and well-dressed individual appeared and demanded \$150 "Ocean money," which Columbiason paid without question, and the said individual haughtily took his departure, leaving the host and his ancestral guest alone with the two attendants, or waiters.

The payment of so much money appeared deeply to interest the ancestor, who was standing close to the table, with the chair behind him, onto which, however, he was unable to sit; and he gazed at Columbiason and exclaimed: "I pray thee, tell me, dost thou not own this craft?"

"Truly!" replied Columbiason.

"Why, then, I pray thee, payest thou?" inquired the ancestor.

"Sh——!" exclaimed Columbiason, in a whisper; and following it up in a low tone of voice, he continued: "Didst thou not perceive the deputies of the Knights of Fleece, placed here to collect for those knights, at my expense, on all things which those worthy knights control? Nor knowest thou that all things they control? I own the craft, but for the ocean's *use* I pay—not for the thing itself, but for its use we pay!"

"But tell me why so much the people must endure?" asked the ancestor.

"The right side of the worthy knights to keep; else this very ship its mooring could not leave, nor could we clothing, food or drink obtain; and were the worthy knights their succor to withdraw, perish would the people ever more!" replied Columbiason.

"Aye, but were the people not before the Fleecing Knights?" inquired the ancestor.

"Truly, but a necessity the worthy knights have made themselves and by their worthy acts, they do dole out to those who pay, such needful things as they may want," replied Columbiason.

At this juncture, although the sun was still high, absolute darkness appeared, and Columbiason exclaimed: "Fear not, O Ancestor! 'Tis but the rays of the orb of day, withdrawn for lack of pay before he crossed the meridian. I shall but pay the fee and day shall dawn again!" So saying, he summoned the deputy of the Knight of the "Sunny Fleece" and paid the fee, when daylight again appeared.

"See!" he ejaculated, "how grand and noble is the worshipful Knight of the Sunny Fleece! He giveth us light even more brilliant than before!"

The ancestor stood motionless, from rusty joints, but his voice betrayed emotion and despair, intermixed with anger, as he exclaimed: "Return me to my tomb, where for ages I have slept in quiet peace; nor let me rise again, lest my soul, tormented by these 'Knights of Fleece,' revile thee!"

"Nay, nay, kind ancestor," cried Columbiason, "leave not thy posterity thus to still remain plain Columbiason by name. Far better that I be a Knight of Fleece in ancestry than thou shouldst leave me thus;

nor e'en a title e'er bestow without my fee!"

"Ah!" said the ancestor. "Thou wouldest join the fleecing knights, and all the people of their ancestral rights deprive! 'Tis well the least of all their rights is this, which thou dost covet, lest they suffer more from thee than from those to whom thou now must homage pay!"

Columbiason partook sparingly of his morning repast, in which he asked the baron-ancestor to share, but that worthy replied that his stomach had been empty for so many centuries that he did not think it well to intrude upon its solitude by inflicting it with indigestible "knight's fee" lunches; and, in a tone most emphatic, he took occasion to say that had the knights of old undertaken to force such high-priced lunches down the throats of the public, however forbearing that public might have been otherwise, there would not have been a sufficient number of swords, spears, axes and coats-of-mail to supply the uprising protestants, who would have reduced knighthood to a nonentity and knights to their original elements, in less than one moon.

This unsolicited information on the part of the baron of old, induced Columbiason to meditate for a moment; but finally, he heaved a long sigh and remarked that he feared such action in a modern age would annoy the Knights of the Fleece and cause them to more than reciprocate, to the greater disadvantage of the offenders; that he saw but one thing to do and that was to become a knight himself.

This assertion again very much amused the ancestor, who laughed so heartily that the very coat-of-mail which he wore, shook tremendously from his hilarity, and he replied to his posterity thus:

"Thou hast said that the Knights of the Fleece deprive thee not of the ocean, but only of the *use* of the ocean; they deprive thee, not of the sun, but only of the *use* of the sun. Thou dost own thine own craft, but thou must pay for the *use* thereof! Ha! Ha! Ha! 'Uses and Trusts'! Thou dost the trusting and the knights fleece thee out of the uses; and now thou wouldest become a knight of the fleece to fleece thy brother knights of title, of which they already have the uses. Thou canst have

the title, but not the title's *use* and *emoluments*, which already belong to thy brother knights!" Columbiason sank back into his chair and gazed at his ancestor in amazement at his knowledge of modern customs. The ancestor then, with another hearty laugh, exclaimed:

"Thou hadst better become a knight to possess the use of thine own soul—aye, to fleece thyself of the use of thyself, lest thou surely lose thyself!" Then, in a state of the greatest agitation, the ancestor continued:

"Nay, nay, kind posterity, let me not linger longer here! Back, back to the silent tomb let thine ancestor depart! Better that this sword and shield and spear be stained with the blood of the dead than that my soul bear this greater shame and hear, unaided, the cry of the living! Thou hast the world, but not the use thereof; I shall have both the grave and its use!"

Having thus expressed himself to his posterity, the ancestor cried, "Come! Come, I say! Loose me from the iron shackles that compass me about, that I may return to the centuries of yore!"

So saying, the ancestor began to dance up and down and around to the best of his ability, in the vain attempt to free himself from the coat-of-mail which encompassed him, much to the distressing anxiety of his posterity, who arose in an agitated frame of mind and, touching a button, summoned the Admiral and his subordinates, who soon appeared; and after a tedious struggle, they together succeeded in overpowering the ancestor, whom, as he stood struggling to catch his breath, Columbiason addressed thus:

"I perceive that thou dost possess another virtue, in that thou abhorrest evil!"

"Nay," replied the ancestor, "I possess no virtues, save those that thou impartest to my soul. Thou dost but smart and chafe under the oppression of these despotic Knights of the Fleece, and I but reflect the discontent prevailing in thine own mind!"

After having thus delivered himself to his posterity, the ancestor was danced by the attendants to the downy couch, upon which he was gently placed, much to the delight of Columbiason, who urged upon

the Admiral the advisability of starting for home at once and of getting the ancient ancestor as far from his grave as possible, lest he force the whole crew, as well as his posterity, to return to that ancient domicile with him.

The Admiral, on taking his departure to execute the order, took occasion to remind Columbiason that, for one who did not desire to impose his ancestors upon others, he had done pretty well, and he feared that such a struggle by Columbiason with his ancestor, unaided, would end in the final departure of the posterity.

Columbiason evidently did not deem it proper to notice the well-meant ejaculation of the Admiral, but he appeared to appreciate the value of the warning; for he resolved to keep a fair distance from his ancestor for the present and not to lubricate the joints of that distinguished piece of conquest until surrounded by his own peers.

It is due to our readers that they be given, briefly, some idea concerning the Knights of the Fleece, in order that they may the better understand, generally, the

reason for the not unnatural longing on the part of the ancient ancestor to return to his grave.

There are some people now living, who have at least an indistinct recollection of the audacity of those, we might say, vulgar and arrogant knights. They had no title at first; they cared only for money power, through the possession of the various industries and things of commerce. There were some well-meaning men among them, but this saving-clause in their characters did not usually manifest itself until they had made very extensive acquisitions at the expense of their fellow-men, engaged in similar industrial pursuits, and of the general public; and not even then, until they had grown old and gray, if not debilitated from fatigue, due to the constant activity of their mulcting proclivities, which ceased only with the symptoms of the breaking down of their physical being.

Finally, in order to control, at any cost, the particular commercial enterprise on which a particular knight of the fleece had cast his eagle eye, he found it necessary to combine his fortune with that of another

brother knight, or, indeed, on many occasions, with the fortunes of many knights. When this was accomplished, their complete triumph over their adversaries was only a question of a little time. They then proceeded to reduce the prices of the particular commodity so low that they became the subjects of special commendation on the part of the people, who, for a time, seemed to benefit as a result of their supposed humane and generous action. In the mean time, their adversaries were obliged to correspondingly reduce the prices of those commodities, but having limited capital, they were unable to continue to do business without profit, and they were, therefore, obliged either to succumb at great loss, or consolidate their interests with those of the "Knights-Fleece-Combination," on terms suggested by the latter, absolutely. After having acquired the interests of their victims, whom they had thus pillaged, or forced into relations of "brotherhood," those wily combinations would throw off their masks and begin to fleece the public by raising prices of the commodities so high, that frequent mur-

murings and threats against them were common among the people. Nothing ever came of those threats, however, because, first, the people were naturally opposed to violence in that age, and secondly, they knew well that violence was useless; for we regret to have to record the fact that not only was the judiciary controlled by the money power of the "Trusts," as the combinations of knights were frequently called, but the whole of the Congress of the United States was not infrequently purchased to vote the wishes of those unholy combinations, which finally controlled, not only everything in their own country, but nearly everything in every other country on the face of the earth that was worth having.

No wonder the ancient ancestor preferred his grave and the contemplation of his own crimes, however great, to the crimes of those inhuman Knights of the Fleece, and rather than live to submit to their piratical depredations, which would stir his ire and keep his mind in a continual state of resentment for such gross and criminal injustice.

CHAPTER XI

WASHINGTON AND LINCOLN RECALLED

The earth had pursued its course of revolution until it had left the sun sinking in the west, with its golden rays reflected like balls of fire from the panes of glass in the windows of the two light-houses at "Spurn Head," and from the windows of the cottages of the life-preserving corps on the beach beyond, when the "British Lion" left its moorings and backed out into the great mouth of the River Humber for a homeward voyage. Columbiason had been so much upset by the little rebellious incident on the part of his ancestor that he was unable to enjoy his very late breakfast, which was taken away and probably devoured by the waiters, without cost to themselves, to the great disappointment of the deputies of the Knights of the Fleece. He had been awakened from a dozing con-

dition, as he leaned back in his easy chair, and a light afternoon lunch was spread before him, of which he ate as sparingly as he had partaken of his breakfast. His meagre appetite was doubtless due to his watchful eye upon his ancestor, who lay on the couch before him making an occasional effort to arise.

The waiters were in the act of clearing the table, when the motion of the great electrical engines gave indication that the homeward-bound start had been made at last; and Columbiason, desirous of taking a last look of the grave of his ancestor, arose from the table, and leaving the "Baron" on the couch, strolled out on deck, where he arrived just as the "British Lion" was turning its head seaward. Suddenly he heard his ancestor calling, and returning hurriedly to his cabin, he found that individual again struggling to escape the reflection of the setting sun, the rays of which came through the window-panes of the craft and toyed, playfully, with his eyelids.

With the aid of two assistants, whom he summoned, Columbiason succeeded in

getting his ancestor on deck and standing him in a position where he could get a good view of the "Spurn," and of about the location of his former grave.

For a short time nothing was said by either the ancestor or his posterity; then the latter, pointing to the barren, sandy and muddy shore which they were leaving, exclaimed:

"What thinkest thou, mine ancestor, art thou not better away from such a desolate and barren shore?"

The ancestor replied: "Methinks 'tis good soil for ancestors, because, at least, 'tis free; although, in this age of my posterity, it would have surprised me not if thou hadst dug mine ashes up from beneath yon soil to collect a fee for the reposing thereof; nor would I deem it well to mention to the 'Knight of the Earthy Fleece' even so barren a plot, lest he impose on thine ancestor a tax for the centuries of past repose."

"Nay! Methinks mine ancestor is too poor to pay!" replied Columbiason.

"That were his only hope of returning to his grave!" responded his ancestor.

Just at that moment the setting sun disappeared beneath the horizon and the ancestor exclaimed:

"See! Notwithstanding thou hast paid thy fee, the Fleecing Knight has deprived us, not only of the use of the sun, but also of the sun itself! See!"

"Nay, the sun hath but set of himself," replied Columbiason.

"Ha! Ha!" laughed the ancestor, "the Knight of the Sunny Fleece for once is fleeced, unless the sun permission hath to set!"

"Nay, nay," responded the posterity, with some indication of uneasiness, "the sun hath but retired beneath the folds of nature's cloak, to rise at early dawn."

"'Tis well the Knights of Fleece have not the cloak, lest the orb of day be forced to pay for the use of Morpheus' arms or wide awake remain!" laughingly ejaculated the ancestor.

The "British Lion" finally put on full speed, as it headed for the English Channel, and its fifty-some-odd flags flapped so furiously in the breeze that it seemed as if the fifty-some-odd geese had great diffi-

culty in maintaining their positions on the fifty-some-odd lions' heads.

The ancestors' eyes were attracted by the constant flapping of the flags, to look in the direction from whence the flapping came; and on discovering the cause of the disturbance, he inquired of his posterity what the goose and the lion's head represented. He was told, in reply, that it was the Columbiason coat-of-arms, made from one of the little birds from the family tree, enlarged so it could be seen, and also that it might conform more in size to the lion's head. This very much amused the ancestor, who inquired of his posterity if *geese* roosted in the family tree? This question for a moment puzzled the posterity, who finally replied that probably, originally, they did not, but as time passed, they must have developed into geese. This still more amused the ancestor, who inquired how the goose came to light on the lion's head? To which the posterity replied that he presumed the lion's jaw did not happen to be open to receive it. This so amused the ancestor that with a hilarious ha, ha, he remarked that, doubtless,

had the lion's jaw been open, the goose would have jumped therein, and there being no goose there would have been no goose's coat-of-arms.

This ended the discussion; for a very damp mist was gathering over the water, and Columbiason helped his ancestor into the cabin with great effort, and standing him up near the table, which was adorned with an electric light and a few small pieces of bronze work, he seated himself in his easy chair and addressed him thus:

"There is that of importance of which, mine ancestor, I would speak with thee in secret, if thou wilt comfortably seat thyself and listen."

"Thy solicitude for the welfare of thine ancestor must, indeed, make him little worthy of thy confidence if, to seat himself at thy command, he fail; yet, thou hast failed to lubricate the joints that make his sitting possible," replied the ancestor.

The posterity replied: "Most truly, sir; to oil thy joints I had forgot; nor will I trouble thee to sit, since standing suits thee well. But thou mayest domesticate thy joints and tame them well, that they

may, later, move from lubrication. 'Tis a privilege great, for ancestry to in the chair of his posterity be seated, and for this, and other privileges which thou mayest in time receive, a favor will I ask of thee."

"And gladly will I grant the same to thee if light and air and freedom shall indeed be free," replied the ancestor.

"My best influence with the Knights of Fleece will I exert to see that thou hast all of these and more," responded the posterity. "I am," he continued, "the guardian of the fairest daughter of the sky—of beauty and virtue a paragon; to look upon whose face would fill with joy the very souls of angels! Her pure white soul doth soar aloft in high communion with the Source of Good, and then to depths below descend, that they who see her face and will, may follow on and up until they see reflected in their souls the loveliness of her own!"

"With such a ward, believe me when I say, thou art a very Croesus beside the fleecing knights!" exclaimed the ancestor.

"Thou hast another virtue, I perceive!" retorted Columbiason.

"Nay! Again thy mind doth know the truth and I but give it back to thee!" replied the ancestor.

"As thou wilt; yet knoweth thou this: the hand of this fair maid in wedlock will I give to thee to perpetuate my ancestry!" responded Columbiason.

"Nay! Nay! Thou wouldest revivify the dead by hitching to this pure, living image of her mother's soul, thine ancestor, whose only virtues are thine own, and which must cease when thou dost cease them to impart! Nay! Nay! I say; virtue ne'er can thrive in such inharmony! Nay! Such wedlock would torment my very soul!" cried the ancestor, showing signs of the greatest emotion.

"A virtue, surely, doth mine ancestor possess, else he could not reason thus!" exclaimed Columbiason.

"Avaunt!" cried the ancestor, more agitated than before. "Thou knowest," he continued, "the error of thy way, and by thy mind, which I reflect, doth tell me so; yet, when I speak the truth, which thou doth know, and answer thee, thou doth my soul the more inflict with virtues fresh from thee!"

"So!" responded Columbiason. "Thou wouldst have my ward another wed and make me both herself and thee forget as dead. She loves another—America his name, and bold, who, in return, would hold her hand in wedlock with his own!"

"And thou wouldst have me share with thee, thy crowning sin and crime by keeping twain these souls by making mine this maiden fair?" cried the ancestor, as he struggled in vain to move his position near the chair.

"Surely," answered Columbiason, arising from his easy chair, "thou couldst not divine the nature of a sin and crime in thy posterity without a lingering virtue, dormant, may be, in thy soul at first, yet ever ready to arise and chide me!"

"Thy sins and crimes thou makest mine, as well thy virtues, which, when remorse doth hide within thee, cometh forth predominant, lest thy sin prevail in both thyself and me, and we become its slaves!" responded the ancestor.

"Thy mind doth wander. The hour is late. 'Tis needful that thou hast repose!" exclaimed Columbiason, hastening to the

side of his ancestor. "Come!" he continued, "let me help thee to thy couch that thou mayest well thy dream complete by dawn of day!" He then embraced his ancestor once more and after a repetition of the moving process, succeeded in placing that receptacle of virtues and sins upon the couch.

The night was not as far spent as Columbiason had supposed. The "British Lion" had proceeded, probably, not farther than sixty miles from "The Spurn," and was not far from what was known as "The Wash"—a large bay or inlet, which washes the shores of the southeasterly portion of the county of Lincoln.

The posterity was, for once, glad to free himself from his ancestor, who had tried both his patience and his strength, and he, therefore, strolled once more out on deck, where he beheld with pride, the distant shore of "Old England," perceptible by the flickering electric lights which illumined it; and kissing his hand in the direction of the shore, he exclaimed, with no little degree of satisfaction: "Ah, land of mine ancestors, soon will I be a lord under the

realm of which thou art a part!" Then turning to one of the ship's subordinates who happened to be passing at the time, he inquired of him what portion of good old England had he the pleasure of saluting. The subordinate replied that the great inlet, around which the electric lights were perceptible, was "The Wash;" that he could well remember the name by thinking of "Washington," a great man who once resided in his own country. Columbiason thought for a moment and then replied that he believed he had heard the name, but he understood that Washington had held no title of nobility! This appeared to astonish the English subordinate, who replied that he had held a higher one—the "Father of his Country," and he thought the inquirer had better remember "The Wash," in order to impress more indelibly the name "Washington" upon his memory!

Columbiason's mind being intent upon England and the title which he was about to receive, he did not seem to catch the force of the last remark of the subordinate, and again asked him what portion of England they were passing, when the latter

replied that it was the county of Lincoln, which he could well remember by thinking of a great man by that name who had also once lived in his own country.

Columbiason again thought a moment, but before he could reply, the subordinate continued that he could easily remember his name by remembering the name of the county to which he had referred. To this Columbiason replied that he knew the name, but it savored so much of popular rights and equality that he had forgotten it. He then wended his way back to the cabin, where he found his ancestor apparently in the arms of Morpheus. "So sleeps the ancestor, and so will sleep his posterity!" he remarked, as he gazed upon the motionless form before him. He then turned and entered his state-room, and preparing himself hurriedly for a night's slumber, threw himself on his own couch and was soon fast asleep, to enjoy peaceful repose for the first time since he had reached the shores of England. In the mean time, the "British Lion" sped rapidly on its homeward-bound voyage, where we will, for a time, leave it, mounting the waves of the sea.

CHAPTER XII

THE GOAL OF AMERICA

The stars were blinking at one another from a charming azure sky, made more charming by a not too distant cloud, whose lining, silvery, soft and fluffy, foretold of a still more charming visitor, whom it was about to usher into the presence of her beholders; for soon there emerged from the cloud the orb of night—nature's most beautiful queen, the light from whose lovely face reflected itself upon the surrounding scenery of the magnificent garden, in the midst of which stood the Columbiason home, or rather, palace; for such it was becoming—more beautiful and palatial-like as the years sped by and its owner was better enabled, with his great wealth, to make it more and more magnificent.

The hour was not late, but the beautiful Queen of Night must have concluded to view, at an earlier hour than usual, a scene

made so exquisitely attractive by the hands of nature and of art; for she seemed to alight from the cloud and, as if instructing it to call for her in good time to conduct her onward, less charming scenes to view, she turned her face toward the same chair of nature which Columbiason had occupied as he wandered from the mirror lake, after he had beheld thereon the knight's reflection, which had so mysteriously disappeared from the vision of its beholder.

As she thus turned her face she looked full into the face of one more beautiful still—that of Liberte, the most beautiful daughter of the Goddess of Liberty, whose image was divinely reflected in the face of that charming maiden.

The introduction must have been mutually agreeable; for the face of the Queen of Night seemed to beam with ecstatic delight on the charming daughter of the Goddess, who turned her lustrous, liquid eyes upon the face of the former and, smiling sweetly, addressed the beautiful queen thus:

“O Queen of Night!
'Tis sweet to look upon thy lovely face

And watch thee climb in freedom
To the skies o'er hill and cloud!
Thou knowest not the anguish of a heart
In bondage held—a soul once free as thou
To go and come—now shackled
And imprisoned, as it were;
For when the soul is bound,
The charming scenes of wooded dells,
With mountain peaks and silvery clouds
And sky, the eye cannot so well perceive
Nor yet enjoy.
'Tis freedom that makes free;
And in thy freedom, I would wish thee well!
'Tis more, O Queen, than even wealth and
beauty
In mine eye!"

Having thus addressed the Queen of Night, the daughter of the Goddess arose from nature's rocky seat, her tresses hanging luxuriantly over her shoulders, which were most gracefully moulded, and, in appearance, of purest alabaster. A flowing gown of white, with becoming folds of red and blue, set, here and there, with silvery stars, completed the toilet of this charming maiden, who for beauty, virtue and loveliness, has never had an equal. There she

stood, a statue of angelic perfection, basking in the reflected light from the face of night's majestic satellite, who seemed to realize the superiority of her newly found friend, in that the reflected light of her charming face, once seen, remained indelibly impressed on the mind of its beholders throughout, not only the world, but the universe—an inspiration to their souls; while the light from the face of the Queen of Night became obscured by the more powerful rays of the orbial King of Day and shone not again until the chariot of that splendor king carried him far beyond the horizon. Aye, threatening clouds, black and formidable, could hide from view the face of the Queen of Night, and this she knew; while the light from the face of this beautiful daughter of the Goddess shone resplendent through clouds and storm, even challenging in competition the grandeur and beauty of his diurnal majesty, the King of Day.

But there was no envy in the bosom, either of the Queen of Night or of her friend, the daughter of the Goddess; indeed, there was no room for envy; for

each understood, and well performed her duty—one giving light by night to half the world; the other emitting light most pure and inspirational forever, to all the world and to the universe; for it was the light of “Liberty!”—a light so pure and holy that, once reflected strongly on a face, that face became a reflector of its rays—a light first caught by the Goddess from the Source Divine and on her daughter’s face impersonated like the rays reflected from the King of Day upon the face of his nightly queen and given forth from that beautiful face to guide our steps when the curtain of night has been drawn to permit nature to retire for repose.

No wonder that men strove to catch, reflected on their faces, the light from the countenance of Liberte, the most beautiful of all maidens! The very thought of holding her in bondage, even in a garden, would have spurred their souls to deeds most chivalrous. Yet, sad to say, a movement, clandestine, of course, was being contemplated at that very hour, to force this lovely soul—born of love divine, the people’s queen—into a marriage with one

not only absolutely antagonistic to her own sense of propriety and justice, but to that of her mother, the Goddess, who dearly loved this, her fairest daughter, with a devotion which only a parent can feel. Strange as it may seem, this contemplated design was the result of the misguided effort of her guardian, the son of Columbia, who should have had the very best interests of his ward at heart, yet who appeared to have been led astray by the alluring reflection of a knight called "Title"—a mere reflection upon a lake, the waters of which one would think should have been too pure to reflect such imperfection.

But not to digress too much, we will return to the garden, where we left Liberte, standing in the quiet subdued light of the moon and looking wistfully beyond, over the verdure-covered hills and dales, and down onto the charming lake on which the shadow—of which she was oblivious—had appeared to her guardian, and toward which water she finally directed her steps, walking slowly, in meditative silence, until she reached its edge.

Not a ripple appeared on the lake, nor

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was there anything to mar its beauty. Indeed, it was rendered more beauteous by the reflection of the face of Liberte, as well as by the reflection of the beautiful foliage which hugged its reclining shore, and of the moon, the face of which, as beaming as when it appeared to Liberte from her rocky chair, yet seemed even more beautiful to her than on that occasion, as she beheld it looking up to her from its watery pillow.

In the quiet solitude of this perfect night, Liberte looked a picture indeed, as she stood gazing into the perfect lake, whose water, from its pure, cleansing properties, seemed to represent truth itself. Little did she know that the same pure lake which reflected her beautiful form had also reflected the knight who was, through the misguided steps of her guardian, seeking to enslave her; yet, a mirror, to be pure, must reflect both good and evil.

Suddenly, out upon the waters and over the hills, resounded a voice purer than the lake and still more beautiful—a voice like that of an angel, sweet and heavenly, and so melodious that the Queen of Night left

her place upon the lake, as if to get nearer to its owner, that she might catch every least inflection of a voice so charming; while the stars, by their blinking encores, seemed to signify approval and delight at the sound of the beautiful tones. It was the voice of Liberte, whose soul, overflowing with captive sentiments, gave forth in song, the feelings of her longing to be free. The words, vocalized so sweetly by the beautiful daughter of the Goddess, rang out upon the quiet night-ether thus:

“America!
“My soul no nobler suitor e'er would crave
Than thee, whose vision, oft before mine eye,
Brings to my mind achievements great and brave
And deeds of manhood true that never die!
My soul, rebellious, from its cage would flee
To tell thee that my love belongs to thee!”

As the sound of the last note died away in the distance, the voice of another responded from across the most narrow edge of the lake, in clear, sweet, manly tones, and in words rendered entirely audible from their perfect articulation, and the stillness of the night.

The words of the "respondent" ran thus:

"Liberte!
"My heart no greater pleasure e'er would seek
Than see my darling smile and hear her speak!
Ah, thus I know thy heart reciprocates
The love that in my very soul awakes
To welcome thee, as well the hour sublime,
When I can whisper truly, 'Thou art mine!'"

It was the voice of America, whose affection for Liberte had long been known to her guardians, and at one time, countenanced. Indeed, had it not been for the interference of the knight, whose reflection seemed to be the original cause of Liberte's troubles, there is no doubt that no obstacles would have been placed in the way of an early and constant unity of America and Liberte, whose hearts were already beating as one.

Finally, through the still night, the two voices, like the souls that gave them forth, blended in sweet, harmonious refrain, in words which they both knew well, thus:

"My love is thine! My heart with rapture tells
Of love for thee, that in my bosom dwells!
My love is thine! To tell thee more would seem
But a re-echo of my sweetest theme!
My love is thine!
My love is thine!"

Just as the last stanzas of the sweet, concerted tones were carried onward, over the ethereal waves, the soft, silvery reflection of the moon revealed the stately form of a youth, who emerged from the shadow of the overhanging shrubbery and appeared within a few feet of the object of his most worshipful adoration. The face of the youth was most attractive and manly—his eyes saintly with expressions of benevolence and love, his nose, Gre-cian-like and perfect in shape, his mouth as firm as justice itself—withal, a face and form handsome to look upon and most worthy of admiration.

Confronting this youthful form, stood the daughter of the Goddess, her pure, sweet face turned upward, toward his own, and her eyes looking lovingly into the benevolent eyes of her adorer.

"America!" exclaimed the maiden.

"Liberte!" exclaimed the youth, almost simultaneously; and the two were in each other's arms.

The Queen of Night looked smilingly down from the sky upon her own reflection on the lake, and as if in sweet sympathy, the rays of her countenance seemed to embrace their reflection in token of love's admiration.

For a moment, neither the youth nor the maiden said more; then, in a low and sympathetic tone of voice, the youth, looking into the eyes of his maiden love, exclaimed:

"Liberte, why the look of gladness
In those eyes to sadness turned;
And why this face so pale
From anxious care
When I am near?
Thou knowest my protecting arm
Will shield thee!"

Liberte replied, with downcast eyes:

"Ah, well Liberte knows thy love, sincere,
Would hold her in thine arms and tender care,
Lest thine enemies would take

From thee thine own
And in a distant prison cell confine her!"

America responded, in a vehement and emphatic tone of voice:

"Nay, nay, mine own,
No shackles can resist the power
Of love from souls made one;
Nor shall they bind thee,
Save these arms, first pinioned,
And this soul, compressed
Within the limits of my breast,
Shall ne'er be free
To fly to thee!"

The daughter of the Goddess exclaimed, as she drew herself closer to the bosom of the manly youth:

" Ah, Title and his horde of tyrants,
Free to come between thy love and thee,
Would separate America and Liberte!"

America replied, pressing the maiden to his heart:

"'Tis no honor, truly, to combine
To separate thy soul and mine!"

Liberte responded:

“Ah, even honor’s eye can scarce behold,
Without adoring,
King Title, in his robes of gold
Made more alluring!”

At this juncture, Liberte’s name was heard, in a voice clear and audible, followed by a second and third call, which resounded through the still night and caused the owner of the name to draw closer to her lover, who held her tightly in his embrace, as he exclaimed:

“Liberte, fear thee not!
No power on earth can take
Thee from my fond embrace!”

Liberte shrank at the very thought of having to leave the caressing embrace of America, yet she recognized the voice of her guardianess, and she knew well that she must soon return to the palace, possibly to await the arrival of another suitor for her hand. In half-whispering tones of anguish, therefore, she exclaimed:

"Ah, truly, in thy care my soul is free;
Yet from behind the castle walls,
To come to thee
Were effort vain!"

America, in tones equally agitated, replied:

"Then to the mountains let us fly; nor hesitate!
The mountains love thee, Liberte,
And thou shalt there be free!"

The voice of the caller was then heard again, more audibly, and was immediately followed by the appearance of Madam Columbiana, accompanied by Count Do Little and two attendants, all of whom approached from behind the lovers.

"So!" exclaimed the Madam, pointing to America,

"Have I recompensed the Knight of the Moony
Fleece
To keep the moon turned on for thee
To wed Miss Liberte?
Nay! Unless thou dost depart,
Yon moon shall leave thee in the dark;
And fair Liberte to the castle
Shall return, to grieve and pine!
Begone, I say! Begone!"

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America cried, as he turned his face full upon the speaker:

“Nay! Let the Queen of Night,
The Orb of Day and all the stars
Of heaven retire to rest,
Yet shall the face of Liberte,
Refulgent from the lustrous Light Divine,
Illuminate my soul and lead me on!”

Madam Columbiana responded sarcastically:

“Thou art emboldened in thy youth
To speak too freely of thy love!
In truth methinks 'twere better
That thy tongue be curbed
To utter words of compliment
To him of noble birth,
Who holds Liberte's hand!”

America exclaimed:

“The soul of such a suitor,
Could it look upon her face,
From sympathy would so pure become
That it would flee the clay
To distant parts away
And ne'er return!”

Columbiana replied:

"Indeed! Conceit is surely thine
If thou dost think
The only one to wed fair Liberte
Is thou!"

America responded:

"Nay! All may woo; but only he
Whose soul-protecting arm
Shall keep her free from blight
Shall have the right
Liberte's hand to hold!"

Madam Columbiana at last became very much incensed at the apparent audacity of the courageous youth; and addressing, first, her ward and then America, exclaimed:

"Liberte, free thyself
From those plebeian arms,
And to the castle
Wend thy way alone!
And as for thee, America,
In darkness shalt thou feel thy way!
The Moony Fleece shall from
Yon moon withdraw the light;
And if thou be so apt

As to escape unharmed
Well mayest thou praise thy fate!"

Then, in a tone of apparent anger, the madam, turning partially toward the moon, exclaimed:

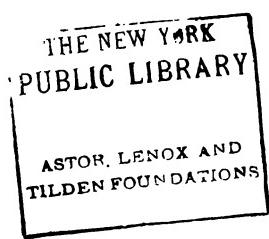
"Knight of the Moony Fleece,
Let not the orb of night
Her sentimental light prolong,
That o'er these hills and dales
May reign the black of midnight
And obscure the distant rays
Of e'en the stars!"

Liberte, as a dutiful ward, withdrew herself, reluctantly, however, from the fond embrace of her lover, and kissing her hand to him, was in the act of backing from him in a half hesitating and disheartened manner, when black clouds separated the moon from the earth and absolute darkness intervened, leaving Madam Columbiana apparently triumphant, and America gazing steadfastly after his beloved Liberte.

Suddenly, the countenance of Liberte became illumined with a light, radiant

HE EXTENDED HIS ARMS TOWARD HIS ADORABLE ONE AND FOLLOWED HER.





with splendor, revealing a face most beautiful to look upon, and more lovely, it seemed to America, than he had ever before seen it.

The madam and her attendants fell back with amazement, as the light from Liberte's beautiful face reflected itself on the face of America, who, still gazing in the direction from which the light came, extended his arms toward his adorable one and followed her.

There is no record of whether the youth followed the daughter of the Goddess to the castle walls or not. Many suppose that he did so and that when he arrived at the gate of the castle, or palace, it was closed to him by the attendants, upon the entrance therein of Liberte. This is, of course, mere conjecture; but there is no reason to doubt a good foundation for such a belief, because it is certain that America would have followed his love as long as he could behold the shining light of her countenance; and it is equally reasonable to believe that had he undertaken to gain entrance to the castle, he would have been prevented from so doing.

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As to "Her Madamhood" and her attendants, the sudden appearance of the brilliant light from the face of Liberte must have proven a shock to them, and it must also have been convincing proof that there was at least one thing the Knights of the Fleece had not, thus far, controlled, viz., the light of Liberty.

CHAPTER XIII

THE STATUE OF LIBERTY RECALLED

The passage of the "British Lion" across the ocean was rapid, owing to the improved character of electrical machinery; and as Columbiason kept pretty well aloof from his ancestor during the remainder of the voyage, there was nothing of importance to record, except, perhaps, a trifling incident which occurred as the vessel entered the beautiful bay of New York, and which might possibly prove interesting to our readers.

It seems that toward the end of the nineteenth century, there had been erected in the immediate harbor of that great city, by a liberty-loving and generous Frenchman, a statue of the Goddess of Liberty; and it happened that the eye of the ancestor—or "His Grace," as we will call him—who was standing with Columbiason in the forepart of the vessel as it entered

the upper bay, caught sight of the statue. He inquired of his posterity what the statue represented. Columbiason replied that he had an indistinct recollection of the meaning of the statue; that he believed it represented Bartholdi enlightening the world. This answer seemed to excite the greater curiosity of His Grace, who inquired who Bartholdi was; and he was informed in reply, that he was a distinguished Frenchman, who dedicated the statue to the United States.

The answer very much puzzled "His Grace," who was unable to reconcile the statue, in female garb, with the form of a Frenchman; nor could he understand how a man could consider himself as the enlightener of the world and regard his statue of so much importance as to desire to behold it so conspicuously displayed.

An English sailor, whose duty made his presence near His Grace a necessity at the time, happening to hear the conversation, courteously begged pardon for intruding, and, anxious to display his knowledge, took occasion to inform the inquiring an-

cestor, in a hurried, half-rambling sort of way, that the statue represented the Goddess of Liberty; that the French people contributed the statue, which was designed by a noted French sculptor named Bartholdi, and the people of the United States contributed the pedestal, as a foundation; that the statue was erected on Bedlow's Island, on which was, at one time, hung to death a pirate; that Liberty was hollow, but the foundation was solid; that the people were, at one time, permitted to follow the arm to the light, but they had long been deprived of that privilege; that the reason the statue was designed and contributed by the French people was, because the American people had forgotten how liberty looked.

The ancestor, turning to his posterity, exclaimed:

“Hear ye!
Liberty, a contribution to thy people,
To a hollow mockery reduced,
Despite the solid foundation
On which she stands,
And thy people of her light deprived!

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Aye, and but a single pirate hung!*

This, too, hear ye, to a common sailor known
And not to thee; and he,
A stranger in thy land!

I wonder not that on a 'lowly bed'
Retired she, beneath the pedestal
Which her statue holds,
To see her light obscured,
No doubt by 'Knights of Fleece,'
Who, pirate bold,
Permit to stand her statue,
But her light withhold!"

Columbiason, upon having his recollection so forcibly refreshed, apologized to his ancestor for his inability to enlighten him, stating that the statue had so little concerned him that he had forgotten its history and the purpose of its construction.

To this, the ancestor replied that it might well be hoped the goddess would not sleep too long for fear another sculptor might not be found capable of restoring her beautiful form.

The "British Lion" had, by this time, nearly arrived at her pier in the great city

*It is of record that a pirate named Albert Hicks was hung on the 6th day of July, 1860, on Bedlow's Island, near where the statue of the Goddess of Liberty now stands.

of New York, and Columbiason had, after the usual exertion, managed to get his ancestor into the cabin. In the mean time, although early in the morning, the craft had been sighted in the bay, its fifty-some-odd flags flying in the breeze, and the fifty-some-odd geese apparently exciting themselves to keep their positions on the fifty-some-odd lions' heads, the manes of which were being tossed to and fro, as if the owners of them were in fury and anxious to be released.

The ocean craft finally landed at what was known as "The Battery," a verdure-covered spot called a park, where the people, on paying a suitable fee to the representatives of the Knights of the Fleece, might go to breathe. It was located at the extreme southern point of the city which, in that age, as now, was the great commercial repository of the wealth of the nation.

The immediate home of Columbiason was, however, nearer the central portion of the country. It was formerly located in the "District of Columbia," a beautiful district set aside for Columbia, the worthy

mother of Columbiason; but the immediate residence of Columbia was in the City of Washington, the principal town of the district; and it came to pass that, as the subject of foreign title and ancestry began to absorb the attention of Columbiason and his Columbiana, the name "Washington" appeared more and more distasteful to them and they grew to see little good in the district where the son of Columbia had been reared; they had, therefore, as above stated, taken up their residence elsewhere. At least a desire to do so, long took possession of their minds, and it is reasonable to suppose that the desire was gratified. The exact location of the new residence does not, however, concern us so much as what transpired there. It is only fortunate for us all that the residence was not removed from the country entirely to a monarchical government, which, it was suggested, the Columbiasons at one time contemplated doing.

The fact, however, that Columbiason did not personally reside in the City of New York, necessitated a change of conveyance for his ancestor and himself on

their arrival at that city. For this purpose, therefore, what was known as an "Aerial Special," in the nature of a commodious and well-appointed air-ship, named the "Falcon," was anchored in "Battery Park," awaiting his arrival with his ancestral ashes, so that there might be no delay in their reaching their destination.

When the "British Lion" arrived at "The Battery," daylight was well advanced, but the people of the great city were not very much astir; to this was possibly due the fact that there were no persons at the landing-place to meet the distinguished personages on their arrival, although communication by wireless telegraphy had been established between the "British Lion" and the "Falcon" before the former rounded what was known as "Sandy Hook," the so-called danger point at the southern extremity of the Jersey coast.

The change from water to air was a matter of not much more than half an hour's time, owing partly to the fact that Columbiason carried his ancestor on his back, which his former experience with that

worthy had taught him was essential, if he would reduce, to any extent, the struggling process.

Although the "Falcon" contained a gem of a cabin, with all the comforts necessary for ordinary mortals, there appeared to be no place in it for extraordinary personages of the nature of ancient ancestors; at least that was the case so far as "His Grace" was concerned. It is due to the ancestor, however, to say that any inconvenience which he may have suffered was caused, rather by his coat-of-mail, shield and spear than by his own importance, which, however much inflated by his posterity, was, in no instance, magnified by himself. It seems that, owing to the centuries of inactivity on the part of the coat-of-mail, the spear, from rust and, possibly, from other peculiarities of nature, had become firmly attached to the glove-like iron hand, for which it seemed to have a special affinity; and the iron bands, by means of which the shield was held close to the breast of "His Grace," had, through the equal affinity for the metal covering of the left arm, rendered that formidable

looking protector of ancestry equally immovable, more to the annoyance of Columbiason than of "His Grace;" for it became necessary to stand the ancestral acquisition in front of the door of the cabin, or car, first, on account of his bulk and great height, including the height of his spear, and secondly, on account of the weight of his coat-of-mail.

It might well be imagined that some little time was consumed in properly placing the ancestor, who thus far, appears to have been only a source of trouble and annoyance to his posterity.

The polished window-panes of the tall, mammoth buildings of the great city were ablaze with glow from the reflected light of the sun, which had just showed its head beyond the bridges connecting the borough of Manhattan with those of Brooklyn and Queens, as the "Falcon"—the "Aeriel Special"—rose above the so-called "sky-scrappers," as the tall buildings were called, on its way to the home of the great Columbiason. The streets of "Greater New York" were now beginning to show more activity; for the people of the great

city were supposed to have arisen for the duties of the day. Very soon persons, whose attention had been attracted to the "Falcon," began to congregate in groups throughout the city, not because they had not before seen an air-ship, but because they had never before seen an ancient ancestor. Their curiosity soon became more and more active on account of the stately antics of "His Grace," who, although too solidified to bow or turn his head, owing to the condition of his coat-of-mail, turned first to one side and then to the other, in such dignified manner that the people might well have taken him for one of the "Knights of the Fleece," on a tour of the country. Then, too, the fifty-some-odd flags, with the coat-of-arms of the House of Columbiason, consisting of the aforesaid number of geese, perched on the same number of lions' heads, were flying from the "Falcon," and this did not tend to decrease the curiosity of their beholders. Telescopes from all points of the city were, therefore, leveled at the speeding air-craft, and reporters from all the daily and evening papers were bestirring themselves to ascer-

tain the cause of the excitement and to place the responsibility for the foreign ancestral intrusion.

Upward and onward moved the "Falcon," oblivious of anything it had done to agitate the public mind. Soon it had crossed the State of New Jersey—the alleged original home of the Knights of the Fleece—and was winging, as it were, its way, with its precious freight, over the great State of Pennsylvania.

The passage from New York was swift and uninteresting to Columbiason, who was confined to the cabin by his ancestor's inadvertently barring the door to his exit; and he found himself resting comfortably on his aerial couch and planning great things for himself and his posterity.

When within about two hundred miles of its place of destination, the "Falcon" was located by means of wireless telegraphy, and the great reception committee was hurriedly notified to prepare itself for the preliminary duties about to devolve upon it.

In good time the "Aerial Special" arrived over the great and magnificent city

of Columbiason, founded by Columbiason himself, in honor of himself, on the occasion of his departure from the District of Columbia. Park Columbiason, situated at the western extremity of the city, was to be the place of anchorage; and gradually the beautiful "Falcon" descended to its place just above the park, where it was securely anchored.

The aerial craft rested quietly, like a hawk, on the ethereal waves, about fifteen feet from a verdure-covered plain, lying at the foot of hills and mountains, whose shadows cast themselves in extended lengths over lakes and streamlets nestled in and gliding through the beautiful garden-plain.

When the "Falcon" was anchored sufficiently securely to warrant it, a suitably constructed step-ladder was lowered therefrom, so as not only to permit the descent of the occupants of the craft, but also, the ascent of the august reception committee, which had appeared at the place of anchorage, headed by its Chief, Pantomime Decanter, fully prepared to enter upon its reception duties.

Finally, the said committee marched, or rather struggled, individually and collectively, up the step-ladder, for the purpose of conducting, or carrying, the now celebrated ancestral ashes to the Columbiason palace.

In the mean time, Columbiason had peered from the windows of his cabin and was astonished to find, apparently, no preparations made for his own reception; and when the great committee, headed by the little, old, superannuated, ancestral spark, appeared before him, he inquired as to the meaning of such intrusion. The squeaky voice of Pantomime Decanter, pantomimically illustrated, replied that it was not an intrusive, but a reception committee, whose mission it was to conduct to the palace the ashes of the Columbiason ancestors.

Columbiason inquired of the speaker who it was that had the honor to address him? With a few more pantomimic exclamations, the venerable head of the committee explained his position as the chief of that body; and being unable to recognize Columbiason since his sojourn abroad, took

it upon himself to demand the ancestral ashes, to the great amusement of the posterity, who, after shocking the sensibilities of the head of the reception committee by disclosing his identity, inquired why a reception had been planned for the ashes of his ancestor and not for himself. In a spirit of much agitation, Pantomime replied that posterity always followed the ancestry, to which Columbiason responded that, if he could get enough lubricating oil, he was going to change the custom and make the ancestry follow his posterity. Of course, this was beyond the comprehension of Pantomime Decanter, who had never heard of such an occurrence through all the long period of the Decan dynasty; and he simply stared at Columbiason until the latter changed his glaring attitude by directing him to return to the palace and see that a suitable reception was prepared for the Head of the House of Columbiason, who, with all his dignity, and notwithstanding his experience abroad, appears to have returned to his own country unnoticed.

Down the ladder descended the dis-

heartened reception committee, or rather, that portion of it that had been able to ascend to the presence of the son of Columbia, and Pantomime Decanter could scarcely help feeling that he had been snubbed by the "returns," as visitors to foreign countries were, on their return to the country, sometimes designated in that age by the vulgar or plebeian minded.

After returning to earth, Pantomime Decanter and his committee hastened to the palace to carry out the instructions of Columbiason, and in good time he returned to the "Falcon" with a cavalcade of five hundred horses, gorgeously caparisoned, and mounted by five hundred knights and their followers, all costumed after the pre-arranged plan suggested by Madam Columbiana, on the occasion of the first assemblage of the great dignitaries at the Columbiason castle or palace.

We will not consume the time of our readers by a critical description of this great cavalcade, much preferring to refer them to the works of any ancient writer on the accomplishments of "knight-errant-hood" for a description, which, if it does

not quite approach in splendor the unique and antiquated brilliancy of the procession which awaited on the great ancestor and his greater posterity, will at least furnish the material from which sufficient data may be culled to satisfy the most exacting imagination. It is proper, however, to remark that the line of precedence was strictly observed, as laid down by the grand master of ceremonies.

When the cavalcade and the great reception committee, and the various masters and keepers, and the populace in general, began to manifest sufficient inactivity to warrant it, Columbiason appeared on the deck of the "Falcon" before them, and dancing his ancestor up to his side, raised his right hand to restore quiet and proceeded to address the multitude. Although the address was short, only a small portion of it is extant; but we are glad to be able to furnish, verbatim, the portion which has come down to us, and which is as follows:

"My subjects! It affords me great pleasure to be able to introduce to the people of the United States of America

my foreign ancestor, who has been carefully culled from the dead ashes of the past and imported free of duty, to live among them and breathe the air of freedom which it has pleased the great Knights of the Fleece to grant to all of us, for a consideration commensurate with our means! The appreciative demonstration which greets my ancestor and his posterity, repays me for the mighty struggle which it has cost me to place him before you; and I am sure he will meet with the same kind consideration at your hands which it has always pleased you to accord to his posterity.

"It is my painful duty to have to inform you, however, that my ancestor is not able to walk alone, and I may have to call upon you to assist him to do so, which, I need not assure myself, you will cheerfully do! (Aye! Aye! Hear! Hear!)

"To this end, by permission of the 'Knight of the Oily Fleece' I shall have to create, from among your number, a 'Knight of the Oil Can,' whose duty it shall be to lubricate the tendons of the ancient armor-plate of mine ancestor, so

as to enable him to seat himself in this,
my country! (Hear! Hear!)

"I need not impress upon your minds the stupendous fact that, having discovered mine ancestor, I am entitled to greater honors among you and among the inhabitants of the various worlds which surround us; and to this end, I have applied to His Majesty, our King of Great Britain and the Emperor of all the Indias, for the position of 'lord' (Hear! Hear!), which position, it affords me pleasure to inform you, is now awaiting me, and which I shall, in the course of a few days receive. (Hurrah! hurrah! Hear! Hear!)

"It is, therefore, unnecessary for me to call your attention to the propriety of your addressing me in future as 'My lord,' and referring to me as 'His lordship!'"

At this juncture, the address appears to have been interrupted by the "Poet Laureate," who, doubtless, realizing his opportunity to go down to posterity, flung himself in front of the Marshal and of the Master of the Horse, and vented himself of an extemporaneous poetical effusion in the following words:

"Me lord, me lord henceforth we'll call you!
So long as on your face we gaze,
We'll ever in our hearts install you
A friend, a friend of English ways!"

This appeared to be the signal for a rousing cheer, and the multitude then took up the now famous verse to a popular tune, and in voices well blended, sang it over and over again until the kind offices of the Marshal had to intervene to restore quiet.

Evidently, Columbiason continued his address after quiet was restored, but no record of it has come down to us. Be that as it may, the time finally arrived for conveying the ancestor and his posterity to the palace, and the feat of securely landing the former dignitary must have been a difficult one. It may well be imagined that all the assistance necessary to accomplish that feat was proffered to Columbiason, but he insisted on landing his own ancestor, reiterating, in substance, his assertion, made on a former occasion, that every one's ancestor required the most gentle and favorable handling, and no one would deal as gently with him as

would his own posterity; that for the sake of the ancestor and of the posterity, he deemed it unwise to impose the former on one's friends until they learned to know him.

Back to back, therefore, with his ancestral supereminence, Columbiason began the descent down the fifteen-foot ladder leading from the deck of the "Aerial Special" to the ground. The heavy and cumbersome armor-plate and the dignified position of the ancestor, with his perpendicular spear and the firmly attached shield which hugged his breast, made the task by no means an easy one; and more than once the spectators held their breath as the struggling posterity, losing his hold on a ladder-round, reeled as if about to fall, and by a Herculean effort, regained his position by the almost superhuman strength of his left arm as he supported his ancestor with his right arm, and then grasped again the lost round with his right hand, as he held his ancestor in position with his left arm.

The final descent was, however, attained, and Columbiason remarked, breathlessly,

as he placed his own and his ancestor's feet on the soil of his native land, that he had struggled with his ancestor on earth, on water and in the air, and he now surrendered him to the kind consideration of those who might interest themselves in him, to be conducted to a resting-place in the palace, there to remain until the arrival of the title papers from His Majesty, the King, and then to be more closely incorporated into the family.

The struggle of the populace with foreign ancestry was now about to begin, and the watchful eye of Columbiason was necessary to insure the safe and careful transportation of his ancestor to the family home.

CHAPTER XIV

THE PRECIPITATION OF ANCESTRY

When Columbiason turned his ancestor over to the "common" people, great and immediate preparations were made to convey that distinguished and antiquated souvenir to a more modern domicile, in a style as much after the ancient custom as possible, without carrying the mind of his adorers back so far as to obscure the modern methods entirely.

To this end, a large sedan chair was hurriedly constructed, without the chair, however; for it was found that, for "His Grace" to be seated was entirely out of the question, and that, in conformity with the dignity of his bearing as a distinguished ancestor, it would be necessary for him to stand erect. The sedan conveyance was, therefore, constructed with standing room for one, and with sides sufficiently high to permit the railing on either side to

come up about to the hips of "His Grace," leaving for an entrance to the conveyance, instead of a door, a hinged rail, to be lifted so as to allow entrance, and then closed, to meet the rail on the opposite side of the entrance. The sides of the conveyance were covered with embroidered and jewelled cloth, so as to give it a sort of ancient monarchical appearance.

The bearers of the conveyance were four stalwart fellows, all something over six feet tall, and handsomely costumed, after the custom of about the eleventh century.

In good time the sedan transport was set down in state before "His Grace" by the four stalwarts, and after a considerable struggle, in which Columbiason, as the posterity, felt it his duty to participate, the ancestor was placed upon his feet in the conveyance, holding his spear in his right hand as a support, and nobly bearing his ancient shield on his left arm as conspicuously as when it was placed there by the desire of his posterity at the time of the exhuming of "His Supereminence" from his ancient tomb.

How majestic appeared "His Grace,"

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standing there, in all his professional dignity, a tower of renewed ancestral energy! and how pigmyean appeared even the four stalwarts, with no coat-of-mail, and nothing to recommend them but their own ability.

It happened that, besides the great reception committee, the marshal, the knights and the various other dignitaries who composed the procession, a brass band, of a sufficient number of pieces to meet the requirements of the Grand Master of Ceremonies, headed the retinue; and when everything was in readiness to move, the band began to play. In response to the time of the music, the stalwarts, who had carefully lifted the sedan conveyance, with its costly occupant, found it necessary to keep step by a constant rise and fall of the feet and of the limbs below the knee-joint; also, to move their arms slightly up and down, thus keeping the ancestor dancing to modern music, contrary to his ancient custom, and so much to the disturbance of his equilibrium, that the emotional agitation of his posterity, at the thought of the possible fall of his ancestor,

became apparent. A courteous request was, therefore, conveyed to the stalwarts to treat the ancestor gently and to do their utmost to prevent his return to the grave. Such a request to men devoid of refined musical sensibilities would, no doubt, have been complied with immediately, but to souls overflowing with harmony, of which time is a component part, the task of immediate compliance with such a request was not so easy; hence, it became necessary for the watchful eye of the posterity to be ever on his ancestor at the expense of his own comfort.

Finally, the procession began to move, headed by the Marshal and the Master of Ceremonies, who were followed, first, by the brass band, then by Columbiason, that his own prophecy might be fulfilled that the ancestor should follow the posterity. Then came "His Ancestral Grace," borne by the four faithful stalwarts, and followed by, first, the Reception Committee, and then by the Knights of the Fleece, who, on this special occasion, there being nothing to fleece, were content to sink all personal considerations and march in the rear;

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although the impression got abroad afterwards, that the protective policy of the knights induced them to prefer that position for the purpose of protecting the so-called "infant industry." There is, however, nothing in history to warrant such an impression, except, possibly, the fact of the ardent desire on the part of Columbiason to perpetuate his ancestry—a matter which could not have deeply interested the Knights of the Fleece, if for no other reason than the impracticability of effecting an ancestral "merger" (a term used in that age to indicate the consolidation of financial and commercial interests).

In the mean time, the ancestor had gotten quite used to the dancing process, and, to all appearances, was appreciating the music rendered by the brass band, as the stately procession moved palaceward to its harmonious tread; at least, his musical appreciation might well have been inferred, from the constant motion or swaying of his body to and fro, and from side to side, to the time of the legs-and-arms motion of the stalwarts, whose souls, expanding and di-

minishing with the loud blasts and sweet diminuendos of the music of the horns, dictated similar inflections to their corporeal extremities.

Before the procession began to move, the erect and stately figure of the ancestor gave vent to a rumor that the Statue of Liberty was being removed, but when the ancestor began to dance, it became evident that it was not that statue, although it was thoughtlessly suggested by some one that it was Liberty dancing attendance upon the Knights of the Fleece. Of course, the ancestor was utterly oblivious of any rumors of this nature, and he was getting quite expert in his balancing feats, when the great procession arrived at the gate of the Columbiason palace, and with a grand flourish of trumpets and corresponding sounds from the cymbals and the big bass drum, the music and the procession came to a sudden stop.

However quiet and pacific the ancestor while in his grave, the time-keeping antics of the stalwarts had convinced him of the impossibility of continuing in the peaceful enjoyment of such quietude in his sedan

conveyance; and when those individuals brought the conveyance to a sudden stop, "His Graceful Supereminence," being entirely unprepared for such sudden tranquillity, lost his balancing powers, which he, doubtless, thought had become a part of his life, and precipitated himself forward, over the head of his posterity, who was directly in front of and facing the conveyance. Landing just outside of the ranks of the procession, the ancestor stuck his spear into the arm of one of the so-called "common people," whose curiosity had led him to look with longing eyes upon him.

This incident gave rise to another rumor, viz., that ancient ancestry had assaulted the "common people." In this rumor there was, of course, a semblance of truth. At least, the incident seems to have been of sufficient importance to warrant a general discussion, by nearly everybody, of the subject of the chivalrous merits of his or her ancestor, and to cause the publication of certain books, containing the names and pedigree of every person who could claim descent from an ancestor of

any kind whatsoever, and from any place under the sun. This gave to those who were considered fortunate enough to have their names enrolled among the claimants of ancestry a certain exclusiveness, and a consequent feeling of superiority over his or her neighbor, considered less fortunate, and the Republic began to fairly quake and shake from the jolting of the birth-marks of its caste-bound citizens, until the official titles of their own country were not high enough to meet their requirements, and there was nothing to them worth having, unless it came from "abroad."

The fall of the ancestor was indeed a great shock to Columbiason, who regretted that he had imposed upon the stalwarts the transportation of so valuable a commodity; and he more especially regretted that through his so doing, exclusiveness was likely to become too general. There was, however, no time to be lost, and he hastened to the side of the precipitant, whom he found intact, and whom, with the help of the stalwarts, he assisted to his place in the sedan conveyance.

As soon as the ancestor found himself

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back in the conveyance, he immediately resumed his dancing antics, which he continued until informed by one of the stalwarts that the procession was not moving, when he assumed a stationary attitude.

On inquiry from Columbiason, as to whether "His Grace" had sustained an injury from his fall, the latter replied that fortunately for him his precipitation was not as injurious to ancestry as it was to posterity, upon whom it fell.

Columbiason, regretting that he had imposed his ancestry on anybody else, expressed himself confident that had he continued the struggle alone the precipitation would have been avoided. He therefore determined upon relieving one of the stalwarts from his place at the conveyance by filling the position himself. The conveyance was consequently lowered to terra firma, and Columbiason retired to an unobserved nook with one of the chair-bearers, whose attire he donned, in exchange for his own more gorgeous costume, and then returned to the conveyance.

The band soon continued its sonorous harmonies; the sedan conveyance was

again gently lifted—this time by Columbiason as one of the stalwarts—and the procession again moved.

Columbiason, desiring to keep his eye on his ancestor, assumed the post of duty made vacant by the stalwart who had carried the right-hand, rear handle of the sedan conveyance; and it did not occur to him, until the procession began to move, that he had broken his prophecy, that ancestry should follow the posterity, by following his ancestor, who preceded him in the conveyance.

When he tried to reflect upon the possible consequences of his reversal of the prophecy he found that all of his attention was necessary to enable him to support his ancestor, who was getting more and more burdensome as the procession moved up the hill to the palace; for while the great Head of the Great House of Columbiason had put himself on an equality with the subordinate stalwarts, he soon found that his muscle, which was not as much developed as theirs, was taxed to its utmost.

He tried to console himself, however, with the fact that even the stalwarts had

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shown themselves unable to sustain his burdensome ancestor, and had permitted him to be precipitated upon an unsuspecting commoner, who, it was afterwards learned, had not only considered it an honor to be pierced by the ancestral spear, but had delighted in referring to the incident as an act of vaccination against anti-ancestralism. Indeed, it appears to have been recorded that this spear-pierced commoner considered the puncture a mark of dignity, and began to exhibit traits of character which clearly showed his bombastic superiority to his fellows, on account of it.

CHAPTER XV

THE WORSHIP OF ANCESTRY

The procession finally found itself in front of the Columbiason palace, facing a large triumphal-like arch, just under the keystone of which was an inscription, in letters of gold, "Welcome, Title, to the Home of Columbiason."

Just then, the band struck up the national anthem, "My Country, 'Tis of Thee." This so annoyed Columbiason that he let go of the handle of the sedan chair with his right hand, which he shook at the band, crying, at the same time, "No! No!!" This action caused all the weight of his end of the conveyance to fall on his left hand, which was unable to endure the strain put upon it, and the handle slipped from it, permitting the end to lean so far earthward that the ancestor, despite his balancing powers, would surely have had another fall had it not been for Columbia-

son's colleague, whose muscular left arm sustained alone the extra weight of his end of the conveyance, while the right hand prevented a renewal of the precipitating incident.

In the mean time, Columbiason, in losing his hold of the conveyance, also lost his balance, and catching hold of the side of the sedan conveyance with both hands, fell on his knees before his ancestor, who, from the rattling of his visor and of his coat-of-mail, must, for a moment, have been convulsed with suppressed laughter. When the rattling ceased, "His Grace," addressing Columbiason, said:

"Thou wouldest prostrate thyself at the feet of Title. He welcomes thee as another acquisition to his pseudoic realm!"

Columbiason was too much overcome by chagrin to reply, and arising he resumed his place at the conveyance, as the band changed its tune to "God Save the Country," and divided so as to permit the title-bearers to convey "His Grace" under the arch, to the foot of the great marble stairway which led to the door of the palace.

As "His Grace" was conducted under

the arch, he inquired of Columbiason as to the meaning of so beautiful a "bow," as he called it. Columbiason replied that its purpose was not only to commemorate the triumphal entry of title into the land, but the arch was constructed, partly of columns, the object of which was to support it; and as the first five letters of "column" were exactly the same as the first five letters of his own name, the arch was suggestive of Columbiason supporting something, as, for instance, "title;" that as every arch is bow-shaped and bow meant a bending or bowing, Columbiason was obliged to bow or bend in supporting that something; that the arch was made particularly magnificent in order that the world might appreciate the grandeur with which Columbiason supported that something; that the keystone of the arch was made of solid gold, and entered like a wedge, thus binding the whole superstructure, which, without it, would be unsupported, and title and foreign ancestry, without the golden wedge to bind them to the country, would be obliged to seek other quarters for sustenance.

"His Grace" replied that it might be better for the country if its keystone was rendered less attractive to the ancient titled fraternity.

On the arrival of the procession at the palace, Madam Columbiana was found in possession, with a few descendants of some "rare" old families, the tomb-stones over whose graves had long since crumbled into decay. While those graves had been so cruelly neglected, however, their existence was still fresh in the memory of these "choice" descendants, and that was a sufficient guarantee of the entree of those descendants into the presence of the revivified ancestral ashes of the Head of the House of Columbiason.

The Grand Master of Ceremonies, on the arrival of the procession at the palace steps, caused the band of music to divide and the Reception Committee to form on either side of the extensive marble stairway leading to the palace. Pantomime Decanter, the distinguished Chairman of said Committee, which he had preceded up the stairway, then turned his face toward the sedan conveyance containing

the honored guest, and rested, first on one foot, then on the other, in stork-like fashion, during the continuance of the music discoursed by the band of brass. The balancing feat of "His Grace" was in the mean time being tested to the limit by the time-treading antics of the stalwarts, of which Columbiason was now a prominent one, and under whose instruction the treading continued in gradual retard movement for a time after the ceasing of the music, so as to insure a like retard of the balancing process and permit a reposeful termination of the "graceful" motions of "His Grace."

When the music ceased, the absorbing thoughts of all concerned were suddenly disturbed by the apparently distant and superannuated voice of Pantomime Decanter, shouting from midway of the palace steps. In substance, this honorable worthy said that the duties which he had the honor to perform were soon to come to an end, and he desired to see the honorable ancestral guest borne aloft, not only to the highest steps of the Columbiason mansion, but to the highest peaks of the land, until

their snow-clad crests should bear the weight of his "Superabundant Eminence" with as much ease as he had been borne by the bearers of the conveyance which he then occupied.

Columbiason bore this allusion to his struggles with his ancestor with as many teeth-chattering grimaces as his dignity would permit, and looked at the long flight of steps up which he had still to assist "His Grace."

How long Pantomime Decanter had been revolving the pantomimic sentiments in his antiquated medulla oblongata (as doctors call the back of the head), before he gave them vent, no one but himself knew, but they had the effect for which they were intended; that was, to move the column. Up the stairway, therefore, the procession marched, to the subdued music of the band, Pantomime Decanter leading, and "His Grace Bearers" coming next, followed by the remainder of the Committee and the several functionaries who had been permitted by the Grand Master of Ceremonies to participate in the formal reception of the ancestor.

On the arrival of the ascending column at the great double doors of the palace, they were opened with great pomp by the attendants, and "His Grace Bearers" followed their leader through corridors which, to undertake to describe in detail, would consume the time of our readers unnecessarily and still give them but a faint idea of the magnificence and grandeur of those halls. A general and hurried description of them and of the interior construction of the palace will, therefore, have to suffice.

The floor of the corridors was composed of most costly marbles, in settings of gold and silver, interspersed with precious gems. The columns or pillars supporting the ceilings were of equally costly marble, encircled by bands of pure gold, which were also set with precious jewels, including diamonds of first water, rubies and emeralds, the whole surrounding tiny electric lights, the rays of which added immensely to the already entrancing effect. Add to this a sky-blue ceiling, similarly bespangled with precious stones and electric lights, then add exquisitely beautiful statuary—all chiselled in foreign countries, thus

enhancing their value in the minds of the purchasers—and last, though not least, add numerous varieties of costly palms and other perennial endogenous trees, arranged with most pleasing effect to the eye, and particularly selected for the occasion, as a symbol or evidence of superiority which antiquity had conferred upon them; then, let the mind picture to itself the fairy-like effect of the scene due to various artistically arranged fountains with electrical effects, and shooting up delicately perfumed water, the descending drops of which had the appearance of stars shooting through a firmament of diamond dust, and one can have a glimmering conception of the dazzling brilliancy which met the gaze of the revivified ancestor, as he was conducted through the corridors, on his way to the Grand Reception Hall.

When the diminished procession entered the grand corridors, the music of the brass band from without the palace, was hushed or drowned, by exquisitely harmonious tones from harps and other stringed instruments from within, the

players of which were unperceived by the procession, and so arranged that the tones emanating from their instruments seemed no louder from whatever part of the corridors the auditors appeared.

To undertake to adequately describe the decorations and the general artistic and mechanical arrangements of the Grand Reception Hall into which "His Ancestral Supereminence" was ushered, would be as trying to the author as the perusal of the description would, doubtless, be wearisome to the readers.

The ceiling of the hall was bespangled in a manner similar to the decorations of the corridors and their ceilings, but the walls were most artistically adorned with paintings by celebrated artists. One of these paintings particularly attracted the attention of the ancestor, immediately on his entering the palatial hall. This painting faced "His Grace" as he entered the hall, and was surrounded by a frame, composed of closely set golden buttons, some of which were round, others oval in shape, and others star-shaped, but all set with diamonds, and the whole illumi-

nated by electric lights so artistically arranged as to cast an even, yellowish light upon it, most pleasing to the eye, and calculated to bring the prominent features of the work into the most conspicuous effectiveness.

The painting itself consisted of a gold dollar, magnified to several hundred times its actual size. Just back of this dollar was a mere outline of a human female form, so faint in appearance that it was almost indistinguishable. This prompted "His Grace" to inquire of Columbiason the nature and meaning of the form, and why only a portion of it could be seen, and that indistinctly.

To this inquiry the latter replied that the form was that of an angel, but it was almost entirely obscured by the "almighty dollar." This answer caused renewed interest and curiosity on the part of the ancestor, who remarked that angels were of heaven, but the painting did not appear to show that celestial sphere. To this Columbiason replied that heaven was the most conspicuous part of the painting, as it was the "almighty dollar."

The ancestor, expressing amazement, said that he saw no place for God on that canvas, to which Columbiason replied that God was beyond. The ancestor appeared deeply affected at this, and remarked that, as God was in heaven, and one could, in the painting, see heaven only through the "almighty dollar," God, also, could be seen only through that source, as he interpreted the explanation of his chief supporter. To this, Columbiason simply nodded; and "His Grace" again assumed a warlike attitude by jumping up and down in the sedan conveyance, and again imploring his posterity to return him to his grave.

It was some little time before "His Grace Bearers" succeeded in quieting the belligerent dignitary, and to do so, it became necessary to conduct him away from the painting so obnoxious to him, to another one which, however, was somewhat similar, yet different, in that, instead of one large dollar, the artist had painted quite a number of gold dollars, behind which was another form, this time of a male, attired after the custom of an ancient knight, with coat-of-

mail, similar to that in which the ancestor was imprisoned.

On inquiring of Columbiason the meaning of this knightly form, the latter replied that it represented "Title," and the coins were gold dollars.

"His Grace" thereupon inquired why the artist did not paint one dollar, as in the former painting, instead of painting so many of those alluring coins? Columbiason replied that the artist had the same principle in view; that he knew, however, it took more than one dollar to acquire title; that in one case, the worshipful love of the "almighty dollar" obscured the vision to spiritual things, and in the other case, the artist evidently regarded title about as ethereal as the angels and less substantial than the dollars, which were as conspicuous as they were numerous.

The next painting which attracted the attention of "His Grace" was that of Pluto, borne on a car, drawn by four black steeds, which he guided by golden reins, linked together with character-dollar-marks of the American dollar.

The ancestor's curiosity was doubly ex-

cited on perceiving this painting, and he could not refrain from expressing his amazement that a painting of Pluto—the supposed ruler of the spirits of the dead—should find a position in an enterprising, living country, where his presence, as he thought, could but be meaningless.

To this Columbiason replied that the age was one of antiquity, which, while dead in reality, was then alive in mind—a luminous reflector of the past; that even the ancestors were more lively in that age than their posterity, and more intrinsically valuable; so lively, in fact, that they were obliged to support their posterity, many of whom had no other stock in trade than ancestral good will; and so valuable that, to those whose ancestors had slept too long to become revivified, no price for the ancestor was too high to receive consideration, if in their power to pay the way of that desired acquisition into the present; that there was always a market for ancestry, which was regulated by supply and demand; and the greater the demand, the greater the price.

"His Grace" seemed greatly amused at

this information, and took occasion to remark that Pluto was supposed to rule only over those who had died in their sins; and, as he was led to infer that that ruler was supplying the demands, he could well account for the activity in the market, judging from the other paintings which he had seen.

There were numerous other paintings on the walls portraying the materialized thought of as many artists, but we will not digress longer to describe them.

Madam Columbiana, when the honored solidified and revivified ancestral ashes entered the Grand Reception Hall, might have been observed at the extreme end of that great auditorium seated on a sort of support, resembling a modernized throne, her feet resting on a jewelled foot-stool. The Madam had been quite satisfied with herself and with her acquirements during her husband's absence abroad. Her rehearsals for the reception had been completed and all her plans perfected for as grand a levee as the century would permit.

She had not heard from her husband

since his departure for "Spurn Head" until wireless telegraphy had announced his approach to New York, and afterward, by telegram, she had learned that he had taken aerial passage from that city. He had not, however, been announced to her in the reception hall, and she was not a little mortified at having to receive alone, what she had thought was the urn of ancestral ashes, for which her liege lord had crossed the ocean.

Her rehearsals had placed her husband by her side in a large, handsomely decorated chair, now vacant, and the golden urn of ancestral ashes was to have been conveyed in great pomp and placed at their feet, accompanied by the music of many voices and of many instruments.

She saw something enter the grand hall and felt her heart palpitate from excitement at the contemplation of the "augustness" of the occasion. But where was Columbiason, and where the ancestral ashes?

As the Madam was thus soliloquizing, the Grand Master of Ceremonies--Poet Laureate--was discovered coming toward

her, followed by what seemed to be a mammoth statue of an ancient knight, towering ceilingward and borne by four slaves, clad in gowns suitable to the occasion. Following these, she thought she detected the grand Reception Committee headed by its chairman, Pantomime Decanter, whose ancient demeanor appeared to meet with her approval. Then came certain other of the receptional concourse, indistinguishable to the Madam, who was looking around expectantly for the Great Head of the House of Columbiason.

It happened that the Master of Ceremonies, while he had had occasion to observe the armored ancestor, was uninformed as to who that individual was, or who were his ancestors. He was, therefore, unprepared for the reception of anything but a golden urn of ancestral ashes. Of these he had thought and rehearsed and composed poetry for the occasion, as Poet Laureate, and he had no reason to believe that the urn was not in the sedan conveyance and watched over by the towering knight, whose attitude betokened watchful vigilance. He, therefore, gave no thought

to the matter, resting assured that when the time came to poetize he would show his auditors that his efforts had not been in vain.

When he arrived in front of the throne-like elevation upon which was seated "Her Madamhood," he saluted the chair and, turning to the bearers of the sedan conveyance, halted those ancestral supporters and the remainder of the procession, in a voice clear and commanding. The conveyance was, thereupon, gently lowered to the marble floor, and the stalwarts and their Chief wiped their perspiring brows and hands and awaited further orders.

For a time silence reigned, yet no Columbiason and no ashes, much to the annoyance of the Madam, who signalled for the services to begin.

The Grand Master of Ceremonies—Poet Laureate—then, facing at times the throne-like chair and at times the sedan conveyance, recited his poetical effusion thus:

"Our ancestral ashes from 'The Spurn'
Are now presented in a golden urn,

Transported hither from a distant shore—
Where they were planted in the ancient yore—
To sow themselves anew on freedom's soil,
That posterity may no longer have to toil
And struggle to obtain them from afar,
To shine resplendent with the stripes and stars!"

This poetical reference to his former peaceful grave was more than the ancestor was prepared to endure without a protest, which he signified by once more joggling himself to the best of his ability, this time to the delight of Columbiason, who, stepping from his place at the conveyance, intruded himself upon the Madam's attention by walking to the side of the Poet Laureate. He then announced himself as Columbiason, and recited, as briefly as possible, the story of his struggles with his ancestor.

The mortification and chargin of Madam Columbiana at beholding the Head of the Great House of which she had, during his absence, been the representative, caused her cheeks to flush from indignation; and she expressed surprise that Columbiason should have become a slave and soiled his epidermis with laborious perspiration

in an attempt to do that which could have been accomplished by his hirelings.

Columbiason admitted that he had become a slave to his ancestor, whom he took great pleasure in presenting to Madam Columbiana, and who was, thereupon, danced up to the throne-like chair with as much ceremony as the occasion and the efforts of the posterity would permit.

Madam Columbiana was completely overcome from the shock induced by the knowledge that the towering, knightly-looking individual before her was a real ancient ancestor; and sacrificing her dignity, she descended hastily from her chair and, throwing her arms around "His Grace," embraced him most cordially and enthusiastically, calling him, at the same time, "Our Dear Ancestor!"

However diligently the ancestor may have struggled to return to his grave, his former struggles were not a circumstance to his vain endeavor to reciprocate the enthusiastic embrace of Madam Columbiana. Indeed, he did not hesitate to say that that occurrence was the only one that had taken place since his exhuming that

made him cherish revivication, yet the rusty armor-plate would not yield to his desire; and the only way he could show his appreciation of "Her Madamhood's" attention was to wiggle himself from side to side and strike the floor with the end of his spear, which he did most vehemently.

His spear, however, remained firmly fixed in his hand and his shield was firmly pressed to his bosom, as if to protect him against posterity's onslaught; but even were he free to use his arms, it is doubtful if he could have extricated himself from the firm embrace of Madam Columbiana, whose arms encircled, to their greatest extent, shield, spear and coat-of-mail, in the exuberance of her cherished delight at the opportunity to do homage to such a towering symbol of antiquity.

It need not be said that the grand reception ended in a fiasco, upon the receipt by the Madam of the knowledge of the supposed consanguinity existing between "His Worshipful Gracehood" and "Her Madamhood," as the wife of the Head of the House of Columbiason. Indeed, every other consideration sank into insignificance

on the receipt of that information. Even the importance of the superannuated Head of the Reception Committee was permitted to dwindle into nothingness by that eventful discovery; and the Grand Master of Ceremonies—Poet Laureate—found his occupation gone for the time being; for the Madam had discovered herself on sufficiently familiar terms with “His Grace” to unceremoniously invite him to a “personal tea,” as she patted his metallic cheek and exclaimed, “And so English, too!” eyeing, at the same time, his helmet and his coat-of-mail; then, between the struggling efforts of herself and her liege lord, the ancestor was danced out of the great reception hall, leaving the invited guests and the great Reception Committee, with the remaining dignitaries, disputing over the right of precedence.

CHAPTER XVI

THE FLIGHT OF THE ANCIENT ANCESTOR

Something unusual was about to happen in the Columbiason household. The Head of that great House was looking forward to the arrival of the title papers from His Majesty, the King of Great Britain and Ireland and the Emperor of all the Indias, conferring upon him the title of "lord;" and there was assembled in the great hall of the palace the Reception Committee, the Grand Master of Ceremonies—Poet Laureate, the Grand Marshal and the various knights, including the Knights of the Fleece, the Knight Master of the Horse, and all the other functionaries, whose former functions had been so abruptly terminated on account of the sudden worshipful adoration of "His Ancestral Grace" by Madam Columbiana. All these distinguished functionaries were instructed to retain their receptional demeanor for

the coming great occasion, which was to surpass in brilliancy and effect anything of the kind contemplated for the reception of the ancestral ashes, or their solidified revivification, "His Ancestral Grace."

Many guests had been invited, but only those of English proclivities; in fact, the coming event was to be the greatest in history—the titular Anglicizing of Columbiason; and the ceremony was to be strictly English, without a single American feature, except what possible Americanism the son of Columbia and his wife might be unable to forget. Everything was English; even the household servants and subordinates, and the commanders and subordinates of Columbiason's briny craft.

The art and literature of the Columbiason household were, of course, English, or, at least, foreign; and American artists, playwrights and workmen sought positions in vain at the gates of the would-be lord.

As for the ancient English ancestor, he was dined and feasted enough to return him to his grave, had he not already become hardened to the vicissitudes of that hadesian abode.

It appears that the large documentary envelope addressed to Columbiason had been posted from the king's palace in England, and that, through the good offices of one of Columbiason's representatives there, a message had been cabled to that effect to the "Imperial"—pardon us—Columbiason Palace.

About the time that the title papers were expected at the palace, therefore, the Grand Reception Hall was again the scene of commotion, with its grand masters, knights and honored guests, walking to and fro, and discussing the subject of the good fortune of the titular recipient, to be.

Columbiason had, in the mean time, reiterated to his servants, that he would soon be created a lord, and had enjoined them not to overlook his former instruction to address him and refer to him by that title. This was generally understood by the assembled guests; when, therefore, an occasion arose to permit it, the Poet Laureate repeated his original verse, which was sung by the chorus, as on a former occasion, in the words following:

"Me lord, me lord, henceforth we'll call you,
As long as on your face we gaze,
We'll ever in our hearts install you
A friend, a friend of English ways!"

"His Lordship" and "Her Ladyship" were at this time seated side by side on the throne-like chairs in the Grand Reception Hall, separated only by "His Ancestral Grace," who stood between them, in his usual dignified attitude. "Her Ladyship" wore the crown which she had donned during the absence of "His Lordship" abroad; the latter had, also, caused a crown to be made for himself, but he doubted the practicability of wearing it, however pleasant it might be to himself, personally, to do so.

At last, a messenger, to whom had been assigned the special duty of announcing the arrival of the title papers from His Majesty, the English King, appeared in knee breeches and other English paraphernalia suitable to the occasion, and made that long-looked-for announcement.

The effect of the announcement was an immediate and spontaneous hurrah! by every person present. When quiet was

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restored, "His Lordship" promptly directed to have the documentary envelope delivered to him in a manner worthy of his dignity and station.

The invited guests then began to congratulate themselves and one another on their having been honored by an invitation to be present upon so august an occasion, and to vie with one another in their obsequious attentions to "His Lordship" and "Her Ladyship."

The great occasion was finally ushered in by the appearance of the Grand Master of Ceremonies, followed by a brass band, playing a tuneful air, composed specially for the occasion. The band was followed by two maidens, in whose hands were held a golden tray, on which was the expected envelope. These maidens wore long, trailing dresses, the trains of which were held by two pages, attired in knee breeches.

Following the pages was the Knight of the Golden Fleece, who seemed to appreciate the dignity of his importance.

After encircling the grand hall, the band marched nearly to the throne-like chair and then divided, permitting the two

maidens to tender the golden tray, with its imperial envelope, to the Master of Ceremonies, who took the tray from the hands of the maidens and presented it to "His Lordship." The latter slowly and pompously took the documentary envelope from the tray, and began as pompously to open it. The Knight of the Golden Fleece then grabbed the golden tray, and the band struck up "In the Grip of the Fleecing Knight," a popular air of the time.

"His Lordship," after the music had continued for a moment, raised his hand for it to cease, and drawing a document from the envelope, arose and announced that he had refrained from reading it to himself because he wished to have everybody present share in the good news which it contained. He then proceeded to read aloud as follows:

"To His Excellency, Columbiason, the Son of Columbia,

"The Columbiason Palace, United States of America.

"Sir:

"His Majesty, the King of Great Britain, and Emperor of all the Indias, takes great

pleasure in acknowledging the receipt of your valued and esteemed favor of recent date, and to congratulate you on your readiness to receive Imperial Title."

"His Lordship" was here interrupted by tremendous applause from his auditors, to whom he bowed in grateful acknowledgment. After quiet was again restored, he continued the reading of the epistle, as follows:

"His Majesty instructs me, however, to express to Your Excellency his deep regret that all the titles in his vast domains have been bestowed—upon his own people, of course, for whom he has a preference—and to say to you that in the event of the decease of all the people of his realm, your name shall surely receive consideration. In the mean time, I take pleasure, personally, in assuring Your Excellency that your application shall be filed away for future reference.

"I have the honor, sir, to be
"Yours respectfully,
"Secretary to the King."

The manner in which Columbiason read

the latter portion of the letter can better be imagined than described. A look of indignant surprise was in his face and fire was in his eye as he finished the last sentence. Then, tearing the letter in twain, he threw it on the platform as he walked to and fro, and, in sonorous tones of un-suppressed anger, exclaimed, partly to himself and partly to his auditors, of whom, however, he must have been oblivious:

“What’s this, this letter doth unfold?
The king the title doth withhold!
For naught have I a friend remained
Of English ways, and entertained
His lords and nobles with my gold!
My yacht in English water lies,
With English crew and merchandise!
My servants that remain on land
Are English of the purest brand,
Yet, hath the English king refrained
From granting me the title named!
Ah, English king! Beware! Beware!
'Tis well, 'tis well you’re over there!”

So saying, the Head of the House of Columbiason shook his fist in air, while the ancestor exhibited every sign of hilarious

commotion by the joggling of his metallic jaws, and once more rapidly raising and lowering his feet.

In the mean time, Madam Columbiana had left her chair and, snatching her crown from her head, held it high in air with one hand while she outdid the pantomimics of Pantomime Decanter by shaking the fist of the other hand at it, to the amusement of the audience, which was unable to entirely suppress the Anglican merriment which bubbled within its soul.

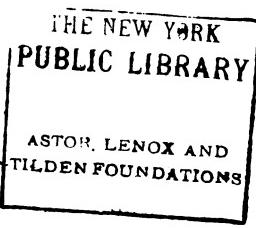
It happened at this time that the well-trained chorus, on looking for the Master of Ceremonies for a signal to begin the service of song, were unable to discover him among the audience, and, thinking the time propitious for the music to begin, opened their throats in unison and sang the previously much appreciated song:

“Me lord, me lord, henceforth we'll call you,
As long as on your face we gaze.
We'll ever in our hearts install you
A friend, a friend of English ways!”

Whatever might have happened had the chorus not gone off leaderless and reck-

THE KING AND THE CROWN IN JEOPARDY.





lessly as it did, the song, at that inopportune moment, added no less fuel to the fire, when the fists of the Heads of the House of Columbiason were beating the air for the want of something more tangible to pound.

However oblivious Columbiason and his wife might have been of the audience before the singing of the song, it forcibly brought to the minds of both of them the fact of the presence of the carefully selected auditors, the subjects of the King of Great Britain and Ireland, Emperor, etc., and tended to greater enrage Columbiason, who was already boiling within and without from the great disappointment which the letter from the secretary to the king had caused. Indeed, he was loath to look upon the audience at all, much less to longer cherish its society; and summoning his secretary, he openly directed the dismissal of all of his servants, who were English subjects, to the manifest disgust of the whole audience, which unanimously exclaimed "O——!"

The whole assembly then joined in the same aggravating chorus that had just before been sung, while the Columbiasons

were dancing about with rage, which was more aggravated by the sarcastic hilarity of the audience, as it took its departure from the Grand Reception Hall, leaving the host and hostess dumbfounded, chagrined and mortified beyond any description of which tongue or pen is capable.

After the audience had departed, Madam Columbiana hurriedly made her exit from the hall, leaving Columbiason alone with his ancestor, who was still swaying from side to side and stamping upon the marble floor in a state of great jollity.

Columbiason, in his rage, had, for the time being, overlooked the ancestor, whose presence was finally made manifest by the constant treading of his feet on the marble platform, on which the two empty throne-like chairs were standing.

On discovering that antiquated individual, standing between and just back of the empty throne-like chairs, he turned suddenly and, advancing toward him, exclaimed:

“And thou! Why have I struggled to import thee to the land of my worthy progenitress, whom, for thee, I spurned?

Where is my sabre, that I may shear thee
of thy lion's mane and *free* thee, to return
to thine Anglican grave? *Mine* Ancestor!
Repudiate I thee as such! See thy goose's
head and its beady eyes, with their idiotic
stare, and dare, if thou wilt, to call them
mine! And yet, they call thee 'Grace.'
Ha, ha, ha, ha! The only graceful thing
about thy carcass is thy coat-of-mail, and
that so rusty that thou canst not walk
without mine aid! Oh, why did I take
thine ancient ashes from their cold sarcoph-
agus, thy resting-place, and breathe therein
the breath of life, that brought thee hither?
Speak, if thou wilt, and tell me how thou
madest of me so great a fool?"

The feet of the ancestor had, in the
mean time, ceased to move, and he re-
mained quiet and erect, a ready listener.
Then, replying to the interrogatory of his
posterity, he exclaimed:

"Thou hast spoken well! 'Tis only by
thine aid I walk, and only by thy will that
I am here. As to the lion's mane, 'tis
thine, as well the goose's head and
beady eyes, and even the coat-of-mail—
all thine; and from thine own imagination

culled, thyself to please. Aye, whatever virtues I possess are also thine!"

"Hold!" interrupted the posterity, "speak not to me of virtues thou dost not possess! Stupendous truth revealeth to my mind thou art but naught; yet thou dost virtues claim and vaunt thyself on earth as truly great!"

"Nay!" replied the ancestor, "whatever greatness I possess is thine; whatever vaunting I would do thou wouldest have it so. If thou virtues give me not, I can them ne'er reflect. Thou sayest truly; I am but naught. Thou art in me reflected, both in evil and in good; nor have I called thine evils or thy virtues mine, much less thy idiotic air that took me from my grave and brought me here!"

"Avaunt, vile thing!" cried the posterity, in tones of renewed anger. "This moment will I lubricate thy joints and let thee go! To tempt me to *revivify* thee, thou art not content, but must insult and vex me to restore thee to thy grave!"

Then, summoning the Knight of the Oil Can, the posterity grabbed the can from his hand, and again addressing his ancestor

as he proceeded to oil the rusty joints of his coat-of-mail, he exclaimed:

“ ‘Tis I who hither brought thee, and ‘tis I who send thee hence!”

The ancestor replied, “ Little needest thou think the power of title gone! Nay, did not thine ancestor require rest, thy struggles would this moment be renewed and thou wouldst be tugging him back to his grave, there to lie until again recalled to ‘pease the cravings of thy mind!’ ”

Columbiason, having lubricated the last joint of his ancestor, drew back and inquired in a tone, as commanding as it was fierce:

“ Who art thou, that thou torment and vex me thus?”

Then, drawing the sword from the scabbard of his ancestor, he cried:

“ Reveal thyself, lest I sever with thine own sword, thy rusty coat-of-mail, and in mine anger pierce thee through and through!”

The ancestor replied:

“ I am his Pseudoic Majesty, King Pseudo, the King and Emperor of the whole Pseudoic realm!”

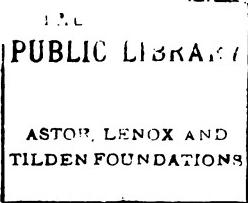
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Columbiason immediately dropped his sword and stood aghast. Another moment and the coat-of-mail dropped to the floor and the ancestor was gone.

In the mean time, the Knight of the Oil Can had disappeared, and Columbiason, finding himself alone, picked up the sword of his ancestor and raising it on high, swore to be avenged; then, restoring it to its scabbard, he donned the ancestral coat-of-mail, which had fallen at his feet, and covering his breast with the shield, he stalked, spear in hand, from the grand hall, his mind bent upon seeking redress for the assumed ancestral wrongs and struggles which had been imposed upon him.



THE COAT OF MAIL DROPPED TO THE FLOOR AND THE
ANCESTOR WAS GONE.



CHAPTER XVII

THE COMBAT

The moon had risen above the tops of the trees, and her face, full and plump, like the face of a well-kempt matron, was looking down on the mirror-like lake, which reflected the radiancy of her smiling countenance upon its clear and transparent surface.

The night was quiet and serene; all the birds had gone to rest and there was nothing to disturb the ethereal calm, save the figure of a knight-like spectre, clad in heavy coat-of-mail, and walking with slow and measured tread, down the beautiful shady walk which led to the mirror lake, over which the sweet songs of Liberte and America had so charmingly blended, and upon the face of whose waters the ancient knight had reflected himself to the great Head of the House of Columbiason, and impelled him, at the sight of his beautiful vision form, to undertake the struggles which had ended in a double fiasco and

caused his bosom to swell with indignation and his heart to become hardened against the ancient intruder upon his peaceful and satisfied mentality.

The tread of the spectre was no less determined than his eyes, nor his right hand, which held a long spear, pointing slightly forward, as if prepared for battle. His teeth were set firmly and tenaciously, but a murmuring sound might have been heard from between them, somewhat resembling the dangerous growl of a bulldog preparing for a row with a fellow-interferer with his peaceful possession of a bone. The murmur sometimes, however, assumed articulate resonance, and the spectre gave vent to expressions of wrathful gloating at an apparent victory over an adversary, in language as follows:

“He fell beneath my feet and left me but his coat-of-mail, which fits me well. Aye, with it will I wreak my vengeance on the cause of all my woes! The bloody deeds, O Ancestor! of which this ancient spear can tell the tale, shall now repeat themselves in thy posterity, and Columbiason shall ne'er again be made the willing tool of ancient knighthood’s wily ways!

Be firm, O spear! Tremble not from fear, thou coat-of-mail, but bear thyself courageous, as of yore! Aye, if thou bear the battle well, I'll pin thee to the castle wall, that after generations may perceive thy rusty steel, renewed by polish from the touch of spear, and made more lustrous by thy victory!"

Thus venting himself, the spectre wended his way toward the lake, with the same measured tread, to which the rattling armor-plate kept time.

At last he reached the beach near which reposed, in peaceful attitude, the charming lake, made luminous by sweet Luna's beaming face; and there, with visor down, he, in warlike attitude, approached that aqueous body, at the spot where last appeared the ancient knight.

"Ha! Ha!" ejaculated the Head of the House of Columbiason, as he gazed ferociously into the lake (for the mail-clad spectre was none other than he), "I have thee now, vile ancient knight of yore! Lift up thy visor and reveal again thy face, whose hypocritical smile allured me! Thou whose words have caused me misery untold. Reveal thyself, I say!"

The ancient knight made no reply, although he showed himself ready for fight. At least, he assumed a defensive attitude, his shield well covering his breast and his spear held firmly in his hand and pointed toward his antagonist.

Columbiason, having well in mind what the ancient knight must say in reply, addressed him further, thus:

"Thou dost deny that thou didst disturb my peace and that thou madest me struggle to obtain a goose's head and lion's mane to pose upon a coat-of-mail, as the ancient ancestor of thy combatant. False knight, thou liest! Who but thou couldst so deceive? And," he continued, "dost thou deny that, before a mere nonentity, thou didst cause Columbiason to bow the knee in obsequious servility? Thou durst not so deny! Nay, by thy silence, thou dost but admit the charge! And what is left me after all my toil? Naught but this ancient coat-of-mail and this sword and shield and spear, with which to make thy miserable carcass sink beneath the waters of this lake, to rise no more!"

After Columbiason had thus expressed himself to the ancient knight, he danced

to and fro along the shore of the lake, staring at his adversary, who kept ready pace with him. He then cried, "Defend thyself in vain, sir knight; for a watery grave awaits thy sophisticated soul!"

Then, fixing his spear for the attack, he disturbed the peaceful serenity of the beautiful lake by charging upon his adversary with full force, his spear penetrating the shield of the ancestral armor-plate and vanquishing the emissary of his Pseudoic Majesty as completely as it occasioned the temporary disappearance of the great Head of the House of Columbiason.

For a moment, there was nothing on the face of the lake at the immediate place of division but laughing ripples, which seemed to grow more boisterous from sympathy with the hilarious outburst of the matronly Queen of Night, whose countenance reflected laughing indentures in the previously placid surface of the lake.

In reality, however, the boisterousness was due to the efforts to arise of the combatant, whose helmet soon protruded itself above the disquieted surface, followed by Columbiason himself, who finally ob-

tained a firm foot-hold on the sound, sandy bottom of the agitated water, from which he soon triumphantly emerged, with no other evidence of the fierce conflict than an apparent exhaustive puffing, the loss of his spear, which was sticking somewhere in the bottom of the lake, and the dropping from his coat-of-mail of large drops of aqueous gore.

Flushed with victory, nor turning to see whether the soul of his former antagonist had taken flight beyond the firmament, or descended with his carcass to watery depths, the former belligerent stalked up the beautiful walk, as he exclaimed to himself, "Columbiason, content with his ducking, may well be consoled with the fact that he has rid himself of his ancient ancestor and annihilated the chief ambassador of his Pseudoic Majesty!"

Her Luna Majesty, suppressing, as well as she could, the laughter which the pseudoic conflict had occasioned, lifted her stately gown and stepped gently over the trees toward her home.

The turbulent lake had again become placid, and only the shadows of the sur-

rounding trees and foliage were left to bear witness to the historical incident which, but for the courtesy of his Pseudoic Majesty, to whom we are indebted, would not have come down to us.

The palatial residence of the Columbiasons was as quiet as the peaceful lake. The guests had departed; the various functionaries had dispersed themselves to their proper quarters, and Madam Columbiana had long since retired to her chamber, overflowing with vexation and humiliation, when the great gates of the palace were swung open to admit the hero of so many ancestral adventures, and were then forever closed to ancient ancestry, whom the great Head of the House of Columbia-son had relegated to obscurity.

Weary and fatigued from his belligerous exertions, Columbiason, on entering the palace, immediately found his way to his sleeping-apartments and readily fell into the arms of Morpheus, who, knowing the hour was late, had extended them to receive him. There was nothing to disturb his peaceful slumber. His mind was free from care and anxiety; for he felt he had

fought a good fight and achieved a victory over an enemy as false as he was fascinating and alluring.

The day was well spent when Columbiason awoke. The sun was high in the heavens and its rays had entered the windows of the hero's chamber, played with the frescoed ceiling and saluted the paintings on the wall, entirely unconscious of the great conflict which had taken place the night before. They were fast approaching the coat-of-mail, which the champion had placed at the foot of his bed on retiring for the night, when the eye of the former belligerent, now mild and peaceful, opened to meet those welcome messengers from his Diurnal Majesty.

After a comfortable stretch, so usual among humanity in general, before arising in the morning, Columbiason was about to arise from his bed, when he caught sight of the coat-of-mail, which had so successfully accompanied him to victory on the preceding night, and raising himself on his elbow, he cried:

"Ha! ha! thou chivalrous mail-coat! thou art the only thing bequeathed to me by

my accursed ancient ancestor worthy of any consideration from mine hands; and, true to my promise, I shall affix thee firmly to the palace wall for future generations to admire and adore!"

So saying, the son of Columbia arose, and seizing the coat-of-mail, fastened it to the wall, where it remains to this day. Then, standing aloof from it, he gazed at it with a look of no little satisfaction, and exclaimed:

"By all the saints, did I not know thee better, I should declare that thou art the very same knight who, by the light of last night's moon, I sent to a watery grave at the bottom of yonder lake! 'Tis well for thee that thou art but a coat-of-mail; for, should I see thee stir, by heaven, these hands would serve me well; nor would the walls of this palace be strong enough to longer hold thee!"

In the mean time, Madam Columbiana had become uneasy at the continued absence of her husband from her presence, and a messenger was sent to his chamber to seek the cause thereof. This was made clear, to the satisfaction of the messenger,

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and in good time Her Madamhood found herself by the side of her affinity, who, whether from pride or modesty, never disclosed to her the incident of the battle which he had so triumphantly waged.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE CONSPIRACY OF THE KNIGHTS

Madam Columbiana was not so easily pacified as appeared to be the head of the great house of which she formed a component part. She had had no belligerent contest with the emissary of His Pseudoic Majesty, the King of all the Pseudos; nor had she had any quarrel with *her* ancestor; and she saw no reason why the crown which she had caused to be made to adorn her head should remain in storage, with opportunities rife, and only waiting to be taken advantage of. It was true she had held the crown high in air and had caused it to tremble at the shake of her plebeian fist, but this was due to an inward agitation, which could only express itself by temporary outward manifestations, and she could not be held responsible for doing with her own as she pleased.

It was also true that the long-looked-for

occasion to wear the crown had come and gone, but it was through no fault of her own that that symbol of monarchy was resting on a shelf instead of on her head. As for ancient ancestry, she did not care particularly for relationship with it anyway. Besides, one relative of that kind in the family was, she thought, quite enough to satisfy all the members of the modern hearth-stone, however numerous those members might be, and she was content, so far as antiquity was concerned, to contemplate the past by an occasional inspection of her husband's ancestral coat-of-mail, which had found a convenient resting-place within the walls of the Columbiason household.

But that she, Madam Columbiana, a "Colonial Dame" and a "Daughter of the Revolution," should lose sight of the exhilaration consequent upon the satisfaction due to a coronation, by leaving the crown continually isolated from her head, was unreasonable to assume. A coronation unknown to her sisters was not enough; for what satisfaction was there in an honor of which only the recipient was cognizant?

Absolutely none. To remain plain Columbiason was well enough for the head of the house, if he so preferred. To remain plain Columbian was different! No; she was determined to have a title suitable to the crown which was the emanation of her own mind, and which was only awaiting the bestowal of a title, to spring triumphantly upon the head of its designer.

The Madam was thus soliloquizing, when Columbiason entered the grand dining-room, where she was found, awaiting his arrival, for their morning repast. His face wore a calm, peaceful smile and there was nothing on his countenance to show the struggles through which he had passed on account of the "imported" disturber of his peace.

The Madam had been preparing herself to encounter a disconsolate and disappointed, if not wrathful husband, and she was not a little vexed at seeing him so calm and unruffled.

Columbiason, however, besides his sense of satisfaction about the victory over his adversary, had, as well as his wife, been thinking over the titular problem which had

thus far remained unsolved by him. That he should continue to wear the mantle which had been left to him by Columbia, his venerated mother, was simply preposterous; and he was determined to emerge from it, as the butterfly emerges from its chrysalis, adorable and less hampered by other worms that, before its ascension, placed themselves on terms of equality with it by an attrition and familiarity which the wings of the liberated butterfly had convinced that little creature it had outgrown. So Columbiason had outgrown his environments; and he was determined to soar aloft by placing himself on terms of equality with the titled creatures of earth's monarchies.

This was the condition of mind in which the Columbiasons found themselves at the breakfast table on the morning after the greatest fiasco of the century, which, however, had ended in so glorious a victory for the son of Columbia.

The salutations were sincere on the part of Columbiason, but rather forced on the part of his wife, who signified her regret that "His Grace" had felt called upon

to so suddenly take his departure; and she remarked sarcastically, that she knew he would have enjoyed the breakfast. To this Columbiason replied that there was no doubt he would enjoy anything he could get; that his departure was, however, quite agreeable to himself, and that there would be no "Grace" hereafter but Columbiason!

Mrs. Columbiason evidently deemed it desirable to change the subject, for she inquired of her husband what he thought the prospect was of her obtaining a title to fit her crown, to which he replied that there would be no difficulty about that, as he was going to be Knight of the Titular Fleece and would secure any title she wished.

This piece of information surprised and delighted Madam Columbiana, but she said, rather modestly, that she would not like to go out of her own country for a title. This amused Columbiason, who assured her that there were no titles in the country worth having, and that, as for himself, he proposed to go anywhere in his capacity as Knight of the Titular Fleece

to obtain the honor to which he was entitled, but she might rest content in the assurance that he would meddle no more with antiquity; that, in future, he would confine his fleecing expeditions to the present instead of to the past.

Madam Columbiana ventured to ask the would-be modern adventurer who was going to create him Knight of the Titular Fleece, to which he replied the Knights of the Fleece were peculiarly an institution of the United States, and that all of those knights were self-created, first, because there was nothing in the Constitution to warrant their election, and secondly, the methods to which they resorted made it doubtful whether they would secure nomination for those positions; hence, they concluded not to change the Constitution, and to avoid the trouble and annoyance of a nomination and an election, by creating themselves such knights, to whose terms of office there was no expiration, as there *would* be if the office was elective; that the self-creating process was a great advantage over the elective or appointing process, and was a saving of much money

and time; that the fact, also, that the Knights of the Fleece did not come within the law, caused little apprehension of undue surveillance over their actions.

Mrs. Columbiason was astounded at the wisdom of her husband and expressed herself satisfied with any efforts which he might make in the direction of title-fleecing, stating that she would preserve her crown until his return from his first titular expedition.

When the repast was finished, Columbiason set himself to the task, which he soon accomplished, of restoring to their positions all of the American servants and subordinates for whom English subjects had been substituted during the Anglophobic indisposition which had afflicted him, and which latter subjects he had caused to be so peremptorily discharged.

It is needless to say that the fifty-odd geese were no longer perched on the heads of the fifty-odd lions, which must have followed the ancient ancestor as soon as the geese took their flight, which happened on the memorable night of the ancestor's departure.

Soon after Columbiason had completed the restoration process, by restoring to their places his former "allegiants," he found himself in the company of the Knights of the Fleece, with whom he had affiliated and had been more closely identified since the desire for title had taken possession of his mind. He knew of the participation of all of these knights in the reception of his ancient ancestor, and that, as his guests, they were present on the receipt of the letter from the British King, through that monarch's Secretary, declining to bestow upon him the much coveted title of "lord;" and he did not hesitate, therefore, to unbosom to that self-created body the deep longing still dominant in his soul, to be something more than Columbiason.

In doing this, he expressed his disgust for things ancient, which, his experience had taught him, were impracticable, and to disclose his preference for a title not too antiquated. He took occasion, also, to mention, incidentally, the land of Pseudo, to which his ancestor had alluded, as possible good soil from which to cull the title

which he craved. This pleased the Knights of the Fleece, who knew well that, so long as the mind of Columbiason could be kept on things pseudoic, whatever control in government affairs they were then deprived of they would be able to acquire, sooner or later.

When, therefore, Columbiason unbosomed the cravings of his heart to the knights, the Knight of the Golden Fleece saw an opportunity for the carrying out of a plan which would at once accomplish results satisfactory to both the son of Columbia and to that self-aggrandizing body, thus solving the title problem and increasing the riches of the Knights of the Fleece.

The scheme was a bold and daring one, but the wily knight was assured, in his own mind, of its success. He reminded the knights and their now co-laborer, that far off in the great Pseudoic Ocean were the beautiful Pseudo Isles, where sat, in state, his Pseudoic Majesty, the King of Pseudoia; and he suggested that Columbiason create himself Knight of the Titular Fleece without delay and set out on an expedition to Pseudo Land, capture the

king and convey him to the United States, to be placed, under a new name, to be designated by the Knights of the Fleece, on a throne of their own construction.

As might well be imagined, this suggestion met with immediate disapproval, more especially on account of the great risk which the plan would entail; and the unanimous exclamation of all the Knights of the Fleece, including the would-be-titular knight, was, on the disclosure of the plan, a prolonged O——!

But the wily Knight of the Golden Fleece assured his auditors that if they would hear him, they would be convinced of the feasibility of the scheme. He then reminded them that the people were as anxious as any of the knights to acquire wealth and station, and if their pockets could be filled with gold, they would consent to do homage to any king whom the knights might name; and when the king should be comfortably ensconced in his position, he would, through the Knights of the Fleece, as his advisers and virtual owners, proceed to tax the people; that the gold would thus return, with com-

pound interest, to the coffers of the knights; that, in the mean time, the Knight of the Titular Fleece could have any title he desired under the new administration, except that of king, with the understanding, of course, that he could do nothing without the assent of his fellow-knights, under whose absolute control he, as well as the king, should continue to exist.

When the crafty knight had finished the disclosure of his plan, the great hall of the Columbiason palace, in which the knights were assembled, fairly trembled from their applause; and a contract was immediately prepared and signed by all of the Knights of the Fleece, including, lastly, Columbiason, who took the pen reluctantly and appeared to think for a moment before attaching his signature to the document. After he had signed the contract, however, something occurred to him, and he remarked that, according to the terms of the contract, he would have no freedom, to which the artful Knight of the Golden Fleece replied, "Not in *reality*, sir worthy Knight of the Titular Fleece, but in *name* thou shalt be as free as ever, and thy title shall be as thou wilt!"

This ejaculation on the part of the Knight of the Golden Fleece was followed by an outburst of laughter on the part of his brother-knights, to the great annoyance of Columbiason, who snatched the pen from the table and cried: "Then will I erase my signature from the document!"

"Nay! Nay! The contract is signed!" shouted the wily Knight of the Golden Fleece, grabbing the document from the table at the same time; and Columbiason solemnly made his exit from the hall.

The Knights of the Fleece then joined in a chorus, of which the words were as follows:

"A band of corporation knights are we,
Influential, steady and reserved.
We do what e'er we do by unity,
And what we get, we feel we have deserved!"

The Knight of the Golden Fleece, feeling quite exhilarated at the enthusiasm with which his scheme was received by his brother-knights, followed the chorus with a few original verses, confirmatory of the thoughts which he had expressed to them, each verse, at its conclusion, being

followed by the same chorus; the verses ran as follows:

"The people would have fortunes without making,
And in our land their wish is very taking;
Now, if their pockets we can fill with gold,
Success attends the scheme which I unfold."

Chorus: "A band," etc.

"And if we would preserve our rank and station,
Maintain our title and perpetuation,
There's one way left—and, good knights, that's
the thing,
We'll sell the country to the Pseudo King!"

Chorus (astonished): "Sell our country to the Pseudo King?"

"I grant the scheme to you may seem quite funny,
Because the Pseudo King has not the money;
But that's exactly where the scheme comes in,
For we are corporation men and have the 'tin.''"*

"We'll make the people think the king has billions,

* "Tin" was a vulgar word used by many in that age to represent the word "money," and was doubtless employed on this occasion to express that meaning, and, at the same time, to make it rhyme with "in."

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And that he'll pay them down ten thousand millions,

And when the country to him has been sold,
Each man will have a pocket full of gold!"

Chorus: "A band," etc.

"This country will be one vast corporation,
And we shall have the power of taxation,
So every penny paid will soon return,
And corporation interest it shall earn!"

Chorus: "A band," etc.

"The Socialistic scheme we'll thus be killing,
Because the people's pockets we'll be filling,
And when their joy and Brother Col's is at its height,
They'll find the country owned by Fleecing Knights!"

Chorus: "A band of corporation men," etc.

When the last chorus was finished, the knights drained their glasses of the champagne which had contributed somewhat to their hilarity, and, with much laughter and a general shaking of hands, they left the hall.

CHAPTER XIX

THE KNIGHT OF THE TITULAR FLEECE

The hour was quite late when the Knights of the Fleece broke up their meeting and departed to their homes. In the mean time Columbiason had repaired to his private apartments to perform the important ceremony of creating himself Knight of the Titular Fleece.

To accomplish this, he imagined it necessary to adorn himself with garments suitable to the piratical expedition which he was about to undertake against the King of Pseudoia. He had resolved to leave to the Knights of the Fleece the important matter of dealing with the people and to direct his attention to the fitting out of the great expedition of which he was to be the head and chief commander. Still flushed with victory over the emissary of His Pseudoic Majesty, he had no doubt of the success of the great undertaking in which he was about to embark.

The self-creating process was easy. It

had been accomplished by all the Knights of the Fleece without difficulty and with only the incidental expense of a uniform—a name which the members of that piratical body preferred to coat-of-mail—and the small outlay necessary to obtain the public sanction after the completion of the creating process. To accomplish the desired end, therefore, he had caused to be made, as quickly as possible, a pair of high boots, a pair of loose-fitting trousers of coarse, strong material, and a blouse-like jacket of equally strong material. He had no difficulty in obtaining a broad belt, a brace of pistols, a dirk-knife and a short sword.

To don this piratical-looking attire was but the work of a few moments, and with his trouser-legs tucked in the tops of his boots, the brace of pistols stuck in his belt, with their butts conspicuously protruding therefrom, and the short sword by his side, and his head covered by a tall, shiny silk hat, somewhat pointed at the top, he appeared before a mirror, where the self-creating ceremony was to take place. Facing the mirror, the great son of Columbia

viewed himself from all sides, and then addressed his reflection thus:

“Columbiason, thou son of Columbia, thou hast proven thyself as valiant as thou art prosperous! Thy victorious achievements have not been forgotten; and the chivalry of the past shall be intermingled with the valorous deeds which thou hast yet to perform, and which shall lend courage and renewed vigor to thy people of future generations!”

So saying, he drew from its scabbard his short sword, its steel as bright and glistening as when presented to him some time before as a souvenir of past favors, by the Knight of the Steely Fleece; and laying the blade against his cheek, he said:

“Columbiason, thou son of Columbia, I, Columbiason, son of Columbia, now create thee Knight of the Titular Fleece, to go forth and titularize thyself and thy posterity!”

Then, replacing his sword in its scabbard, he raised his right hand and, continuing his address to his reflection, said:

“Columbiason, thou son of Columbia, I, Columbiason, son of Columbia, by this

act of my right hand, held high, after the true modern methods, take the oath of allegiance to thee and swear to achieve for thy greatness, after the manner of all Knights of the Fleece, of whom I am now a titular brother, the highest title which it is my privilege to obtain for thee!"

Then, drawing both pistols from their places in his belt, he kissed, first one, then the other, and replacing them, drew forth his dirk and sword, each of which he likewise kissed and replaced; then, after the manner of a "pirate bold," he made his exit from his apartment.

Soon thereafter, he announced himself to his wife, through an attendant, as the "Knight of the Titular Fleece!" and was ushered into her presence, prepared for the expedition, so far as he personally was concerned. Of course, Madam Columbi-ana was astonished and amazed at the sight of the formidable-looking knight who, although he approached her with endearing words, was unable to make a pre-possessing impression upon her; and, for a time, she hesitated to permit too close proximity on his part. Finally, however,

he convinced her that he was the son of Columbia disguised, and she became pacified and consented to listen to his plans and expectations.

These he entered into in detail and stated that his object was, first, to gain admittance to the presence of King Pseudo and to try to convince him of the great advantage that it would be to him to increase the extent of his dominions, already very large, and to persuade him, if possible, to come to the United States; but if he would not come by pacific means, the intention was to seize him and bring him to this country by force, to reign under a name to be designated by his (Columbiason's) brother Knights of the Fleece.

"But the *people* reign in this country!" exclaimed Madam Columbiana, in a spirit of patriotism.

"They do in *name*, under the supervision of the Knights of the Fleece!" replied Columbiason; "and," he continued, "they will reign in the same way under His Pseudoic Majesty, who will be under the supervision of those knights, who will dictate the policy of the country the same

as now; but the country will then have a head to whom the knights can shift their responsibility!"

"And you a Knight of the Fleece!" cried Madam Columbiana, indignantly.

"Aye, of the Titular Fleece—that is, I hold the title, but the knights perform the duties!" responded Columbiason.

"But there is no honor in such a title!" exclaimed the Madam.

"I have all the honor, and they do the work, as if they were my hirelings!" replied Columbiason, as he pompously straightened himself in the chair, in which he had become seated; "and," he continued, "His Majesty, the King of Great Britain and Ireland, and Emperor of all the Indias, who denied me a title under his realm, has no greater honor, except that the people call him 'King;' and they shall call me by any title I prefer to assume, under his Pseudoic Majesty. Remember, too, that thou art the wife of Columbiason and that thou shalt share with him the honor!"

"Honor!" cried Madam Columbiana. "I repudiate such a spurious honor! Surely

didst thou get into bad company when thou didst choose the Knights of the Fleece for thy companions! Nay! Nay! Columbiason, go if thou wilt; as for me, count not upon my co-operation in such an undertaking!"

"Ha, ha, thou hast a crown! For what? To lie in storage with its precious gems, or to rest upon thy head as the wife of thy husband?" exclaimed Columbiason.

"A crown of thorns instead of gems, I fear!" replied the Madam.

"Nay, a crown of gems, good enough to adorn thy head as 'Lady Columbiason' under a foreign potentate, had I been created a lord, but not good enough to show thy superiority in thine own country!" replied Columbiason.

"His Pseudoic Majesty is as foreign to our country as is the King of England!" replied Madam Columbiana.

"Except that here, His Pseudoic Majesty is the people's choice through the courtesy of the Knights of the Fleece," replied Columbiason.

Madam Columbiana made no reply, but arose and walked to a secret repository in

the wall of the apartment. This she unlocked, and took therefrom the crown which she had caused to be made for the occasion which had ended in such a humiliating manner. She then returned to her husband's side, with the crown in her hand.

"And," continued Columbiason, on the return of his wife, "it even suited thee well to conspire with me to marry our ward, Liberte, to an English nobleman, yet I doubt not that thou wilt now oppose her marriage to the head of the Knights of the Fleece—a product of our own country; and thou wouldest call this patriotism?"

"There shall be no opposition from me to such a marriage, provided she remain in the country," responded his wife.

"It would ill become the Knights of the Fleece to remove from the country one to whom the people can point with pride, as the spirit of their freedom!" answered Columbiason; "but," he continued, "the people will see less of her than heretofore;" then, catching sight of the crown, which Madam Columbiana had laid on the table

before him, he held it up, and gazing upon it said:

"See! As its gems are superior, so is she whose head it adorns," and placing the crown on his wife's head, he exclaimed: "Thou hast a charm peculiar to thyself, yet doubled by a crown!"

Madam Columbiana took the crown from her head, held it aloft, as on a previous occasion, yet more tenderly and admiringly, then pressing it to her heart, she exclaimed:

"Tell me not that Eve tempted Adam!" She then left the apartment in a spirit of evident consolation over the fact that she had at least resisted the temptation to the utmost of her ability. Columbiason looked after her until she had disappeared; he then exclaimed to himself: "Ha, ha, ha, my life seems crowned with conquests, but the greatest victory yet achieved is over my own wife, who will now do her part at home, while I am making further conquests abroad!" He then left the apartment in a state of evident satisfaction, and in a manner quite consequential.

CHAPTER XX

THE PIRATICAL EXPEDITION

The "Title Fiend," to which the name of the "Falcon" had been changed by direction of its owner, because the latter name was regarded as too English, was anchored over the garden which enclosed the Columbiason palace. It was well manned by American navigators, and was about ready to weigh anchor when Columbiason, the great Pseudoic Explorer, arrived at the place of anchorage, attired in his piratical outfit, and accompanied by Madam Columbiania.

It was thought best by the Knights of the Fleece to keep the departure of Columbiason as secret as propriety would admit, for fear the plans for a "quick descent" of the "Title Fiend," with the Pseudo King, on the return voyage, might be interfered with before their completion; hence, the night-time was decided upon as the most appropriate time for the ascension.

The night was dark and, so far as light was concerned, there was no indication of the "Title Fiend" floating over the palace gardens, at the place of anchorage, except an incandescent lamp, which hung suspended from a pole, near the foot of a ladder leading to that air-ship, and but for which, Columbiason would have had to feel his way to the deck of the craft, which lay suspended above the tops of the trees and buildings, awaiting the signal to waft itself over the Pseudoic Ocean. At that time there were no aerial stations, with elevators to carry passengers to and from the air-ships, and the task of ascending to the "Title Fiend" was not an easy one. However, Columbiason, after bidding adieu to his life companion, placed his foot on the bottom round of the ladder, and in a few moments was at the top and upon the deck of the craft. Whatever indisposition he may have felt from his long climb, he knew that, were the head of a piratical expedition to show signs of fatigue before the "Title Fiend" had left its anchorage, subordinates and officers would be likely to hesitate about em-

barking under such a leader, who they would be justified in supposing, would be unlikely to win a victory over his opponents in conflict. Therefore, with half-suppressed puffs from the exertion due to the ascension, he stepped in a sprightly manner on deck, where he was met by his fellow-officers-in-piratical-arms and soon disappeared into his private cabin, to complete his puffing to his heart's content.

Shortly thereafter, the "Title Fiend" weighed anchor and lifted its head as high as if it were the Head of the House of Columbiason himself; then it seemed to indulge in a little titular-like strutting, swaying itself from side to side, and rising higher, like a self-important "boss," recently promoted from a laborer to a position over his fellows; and with the same seeming air of pomposity, it strutted on and up until it reached a current of air less boisterous, where its importance was known only to itself; then it seemed to become more natural and sped along more rapidly, and apparently with less self-consciousness, until it was beyond the sight of the brilliant lights of the cities of the terra-firma realm.

Suddenly the "Title Fiend" was as luminous as were the ships of the briny deep under it. His fiendish electric eyes flashed fire, as they glanced, first to the right, then to the left, and he sped faster and faster on his piratical mission toward the stars, which could not keep still under the piercing glances of those electric orbs.

Columbiason, in the mean time, felt great consolation in the fact that he was at last on his way to another victory, and *that*, beyond the things of earth, as he supposed; and he seemed quite anxious for the affray which would bring laurels to his own brow and permit Madam Columbiana to wear the crown so carefully preserved, only to be kept from public view until an occasion worthy of its formal entry into conspicuousness should present itself.

In planning the Pseudoic expedition, Columbiason had decided to have made in his own country such costumes as he thought appropriate for the use of persons of such high rank and degree as His Pseudoic Majesty and his court, and to convey

the costumes to Pseudo Land, to be donned by those Pseudos, who, he was determined, should appear in the United States robed therein. He took good care, in having these costumes made, to see that, in brilliancy, they should approach, as near as possible, the crown which was to adorn the aspiring pompadour of Madam Columbiana.

The manufacture and transportation of these costumes was a source of satisfaction to him, as well as to the tailors who made them; and as he leaned back in his handsomely upholstered chair, in the cabin of the "Title Fiend," he contemplated with considerable pride the gorgeous effect sure to follow the appearance in his country of an unknown people attired in costumes so magnificent.

This led him to wonder who the Pseudos were, and to try to picture in his imagination their peculiarities, customs, natures and requirements, as well as their appearance, and, especially, their fighting qualities. That these people had a court was, he thought, beyond question, or they could not have a king; and if they had a

court, he argued, they certainly must have a large, standing Pseudo army and an extensive Pseudo navy; hence, he thought it important to avoid the navy, and, as soon as the capital city should become visible, to steer the "Title Fiend" directly for it and take possession, which he felt was nine points of the law.

While Columbiason was thus musing and planning, the Admiral of the craft rushed into his cabin and informed him that the Pseudo-stellar system was quite visible, which was, he said, evidence that the ship had reached a point nearly in the centre of the Pseudoic Ocean, and in close proximity to the Pseudo Isles, where resided His Pseudoic Majesty, King Pseudo.

Columbiason arose suddenly from his reverie, and grasping the handles of his pistols, remarked that he did not know that Pseudo Land was so near home; then, thinking for a moment, he unsheathed his dirk, examined it carefully and, re-sheathing it, directed that all the lights on the "Title Fiend" be extinguished and the speed reduced.

The carrying out of this order was but

the work of a moment, and soon the noise of the engines almost ceased and the "Title Fiend" was basking in the light of the Pseudo stars, as confidently as if the light of real stars and of a real sun were contributing directly to illumine its path to Pseudo Land.

Columbiason then directed to have the "pseudoscope" brought to him without delay. This was done, and levelling that instrument over the railing of the craft, he peered out upon the Pseudoic Ocean, in an effort to catch sight of a Pseudo man. The Admiral's eye was keener than the pseudoscope; for he saw the Pseudo Isles just ahead of the "Title Fiend," brilliantly lighted by the light of the Pseudo-stellar system.

Cautiously the air-ship crept, as it were, toward the largest of the isles, which seemed situated in the centre of the numerous other Pseudo isles that surrounded it, as if to protect it from disturbing outside influences.

In due time, the aerial craft was wafted to a suitable resting-place at this large island, which was found to be "Pseudoia,"

the capital of Pseudo Land—the very place where Columbiason was sure to find the reigning Monarch of the great Pseudoic realm.

Not an island had thus far offered resistance to the “titular” expedition, much to the delight of Columbiason, who, while always ready to meet the enemy, was glad to avoid, when possible, the annoyance which all conflicts occasion. Not knowing, however, with what opposition he would be likely to meet at Pseudoia, he took good care not to disarm until occasion warranted it; hence, with the Admiral, he landed in the guise of a full-fledged pirate, much to the amusement of King Pseudo, who, to Columbiason’s great surprise, stood near the place of anchorage, waiting to receive him.

The King had with him no attendants or guards of any kind; on the contrary, he was thoroughly at the mercy of the Knight of the Titular Fleece, who stood gazing at him in greater astonishment; for he found the King as sparsely clad as he was unprotected; in fact, “His Majesty” had on only sufficient clothing to shield

him from the pseudoic breezes, and even that attire was pseudoic.

"So, we meet again!" said the King.

Columbiason was taken back, and, with all his bravery, would doubtless have fallen, had it not been for the support given to him by his title. When he recovered himself, he exclaimed in amazement, "Mine Ancestor!"

"Nay, thou art now in Pseudo Land, and I perceive thou art inclined to falsify thy genealogy!" replied the King.

"Not intentionally," responded Columbiason.

"I dare say not, but a falsity is false, whatever the intention of the falsifier!" answered King Pseudo.

"If thou art *not* mine ancestor, pray tell me who art thou?" inquired Columbia-son.

"I am he whom thou hast been seeking—His Pseudoic Majesty, King of all the Pseudos and Emperor of the whole Pseudoic realm!" responded the King. "Thou hast," he continued, "anchored thy craft, not in terra-firma, for here thine anchor is imbedded in thought—false thought!"

"Have I not already struggled with thee?" inquired Columbiason.

"Aye, verily; and I present thee with this little 'pseudometer,' that thou mayest register thy pseudoism, lest thou imbibe too much thereof," replied the King, as he took from beneath his scanty mantle a little instrument and handed it to the Knight of the Titular Fleece. "Thou art not yet," he continued, "pseudomorphous in form, nor trained in the ways of Pseudoic government, yet thou hast seen fit to seek King Pseudo in the very capital of his own dominions, with sword and pistols by thy side, which availeth not against so powerful an adversary—aye, not half so much as the little pseudometer, of which thou art now in possession!"

Columbiason took the little instrument—oval-like in shape, with a shining glass-like substance in the centre, and open at each end, the glass being apparently opaque. He then held it to his eye and exclaimed: "Ha, ha, at last I see my title clear!"

"Nay," cried King Pseudo, "thou already hast pseudolepsis, and thou hast not been half an hour in my kingdom.

The pseudometer registers but pseudo thoughts. If thou wilt but keep thy thoughts undefiled, thy vision will be clear!"

Columbiason could scarcely help expressing astonishment at so philosophical a declaration from a pseudo king; and stepping back and glancing at the King's mantle, he said, in a superior manner: "And thou, with a mantle thus ragged and worn, wouldst venture advice so philosophical to the Knight of the Titular Fleece! Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha! *a king!*"

"Aye, a king! This mantle is but the remnant of false pride. Once it was pseudoically gorgeous and apparently beautiful to behold, but as its owner became less vainglorious, the mantle faded in his eyes, hence in the eyes of the Pseudos. King Pseudo is but the reflection of mortal-mind thought, which clothes him as it will," replied His Pseudoic Majesty; then, walking a few steps to a Pseudoic wall, which surrounded the Pseudo palace, he touched a secret spring, and a pseudothyron (a false or secret door) opened before them; then, turning to Columbiason,

he said: "Come! let us go in, and I will show thee much to enlighten thee, unless thy pseudometer act in vain!"

The King then entered the door, followed by Columbiason, behind whom the door immediately closed, as quietly as it had opened, and the two dignitaries soon found themselves in the Pseudoic gardens, and on their way to the palace of His Pseudoic Majesty.

The gardens were, seemingly, abloom with flowers, buds and roses, but they emitted no odor, and were absolutely lifeless. This amazed Columbiason, and he was about to inquire of His Majesty the cause thereof, when the King pointed to the seeming flowers and exclaimed:

"See! These seeming buds and roses are the reflections of what, once, were the American beauty rose, except that they are lifeless; the buds were plucked before their time, and the roses were sapped of their life. Thou must not be surprised if the very republic from which thou hail-est, follow in the wake of these once living and beautiful buds and roses."

Columbiason answered not a word, but

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he hung his head and appeared to think deeply, as he walked with the King through the winding paths of the garden, on their way to the palace, which they soon approached, and which Columbiason found to be pseudo-dipteral in shape, and, in appearance, altogether different from what he had expected, after having beheld the dilapidated garment of King Pseudo.

CHAPTER XXI

IN THE PSEUDOIC REALM

On entering the Pseudo Palace, a court of no inconsiderable magnitude was noticeable, but the courtiers were poorly clad, and some of their faces had the appearance of the faces of various animals. This seemed shocking to Columbiason, who exclaimed:

“I perceive, Your Majesty, that some of thy people have faces resembling, somewhat, those of animals. Did I not know they were human beings, I should think them wolves, foxes and even serpents. I behold, also, a lamb among them, and I marvel that he is not torn to pieces by the more ferocious-looking people!”

“Need I again remind thee,” replied the King, “that this is Pseudo Land—a land of false thought reflection? They whom thou beholdest are but the reflections of mortal-mind thoughts. Some

people are foxy, some are wolfish, and some are serpent-like, striking their mental fangs into the very minds of their fellow-beings. Even the lamb thou beholdest is a wolf in lamb's clothing. All thought is registered, not only in the mind that sends it forth, but also in the universal mortal mind. If the thought is pure, it purifies; if evil, it degrades and becomes the disturbing element of nature. If humans lived their lives as naturally as the flowers, undisturbed by evil thoughts and false beliefs, King Pseudo's throne would be vacant; for there would be no Pseudo Land! King Pseudo himself, is clothed with mortal vesture, and mortal mind thinks him great and powerful; but he has only the greatness and power thus bestowed—a power purely pseudoic, and subject to change at the will of mortals!"

"Then will I change thee to a being, pure, benevolent, humane and patriotic!" exclaimed Columbiason, with a show of much enthusiasm.

"To thus change King Pseudo and his court, thou must first change thine own thoughts!" replied the King. "Why," he

continued, "hadst thou not, in thine arrogant pride and longing for title, pictured in thine own mind the ancient knight, his reflection would not have personated itself through thy mind upon the lake and caused thee to struggle so arduously with thy pseudoic ancestor!"

Columbiason marvelled at King Pseudo's knowledge of his own struggles, and was about to reply to him, when he caught sight of the very knight whose reflection had been the cause of his troubles. Drawing his sword from its scabbard, he gazed at the knight and cried:

"Did I not send thee to the bottom of the lake? If not, then hast thou a brother, or am I mad? Shall I never of thee rid myself? Aye; come forth, that I may again meet thee in mortal combat and drive thee from the land of Pseudo, as I drove thee from mine own country."

Thus saying, Columbiason was about to spring upon his former antagonist, when the King cried, "Hold! Thinkest thou not that thou canst, by physical force, exterminate thine own thoughts! By thy thought thou didst both seek and exter-

minate thine ancient ancestor, whom thou now dost seek as king! Likewise couldst thou have rid thyself of the ancient knight, with whom thou art now at odds. When one is at enmity with his own thoughts, he should change his thought; or, better still, he should let only the good and the true emanate from his mind, that he may have no cause to change his thought!"

"Thou art a philosopher as well as a king!" exclaimed Columbiason, as he gazed upon the King in apparent admiration.

"Nay! King Pseudo has no virtues of his own! He but acts as a register of false mortal-mind thoughts, which are sometimes expelled by the good and true. If mortals would guard their thoughts and think only the true, there would be a chance of King Pseudo's conversion; for the predominance of the true would, like pure water, poured into a cup of muddy liquid, take the place of the impure. At present, the false appears to predominate among mortals, and King Pseudo but reflects it!"

"Then is King Pseudo Satan?" cried Columbiason, in an agitated tone of voice.

"Satan is the *premeditated evil thoughts* and *deeds* of mortal-mind; King Pseudo originates nothing. He is a *reflection* of the *false thoughts* and *ideas* of mortals!" replied the King. Then, beckoning to Columbiason, he led the way to a hall, filled with gorgeous as well as dilapidated costumes, and on the latter's expressing amazement that the King should permit himself and his court to be so poorly attired, with so many magnificent costumes within his reach, King Pseudo replied: "All these costumes, which once I wore, were but the vesture of false thoughts, and as the thoughts were changed, I was obliged to cast them off and robe anew. The garment which now I wear is but awaiting an entire change of thought, and it will take its place with those cast away, and which thou now beholdest! In the case of the seemingly most gorgeous mantles, the change from the false to the true thoughts was sudden, while the most dilapidated garments were worn threadbare before the false thoughts gave way to the true."

"Then, if of this mantle Your Majesty can be relieved, the son of Columbia will

supply its place with one more gorgeous than ever king beheld," replied Columbiason; "and," he continued, "thy whole Pseudoic realm shall bow before thee in calm submission, on account of thy great splendor!"

"A splendor only to fade away, like the splendor of the generations gone before; for believe me, Sir Knight, there is no real splendor in the land of Pseudo!" replied the King.

"I will take thee from the land of Pseudo, aye, to the United States of America; both thou and thy court shall go with me!" exclaimed Columbiason.

"Ha! that is a part of my realm," ejaculated King Pseudo.

"Thy realm is most extensive," exclaimed Columbiason, in amazement.

"Aye, truly; there is no place on the earth among humans, where King Pseudo is not welcome!" replied the King.

"Thou art a greater monarch than Columbiason knew, and whatever name and fame he might have had, by affiliation with the monarchs of other dynasties, would pale into insignificance before the

greatness that awaits him as a subject of Your Pseudoic Majesty!" exclaimed Columbiason, as he bowed low before the pride-stricken mantle of King Pseudo.

"Thou hadst better look to thy pseudometer," said King Pseudo, smiling, as Columbiason was in the act of arising from his stooping position.

At this juncture the King's daughter, the Princess Pseu, and her mother, the Queen, known among the native Pseudos as the "Pseudoine," entered the presence of the King and the Knight of the Titular Fleece.

The Queen and the Princess were clad in neat, though not gaudy costumes, but their manner was exceedingly haughty and overbearing. They were both fair in appearance, but on close inspection, their faces would have been shown to be "made up." However, their appearance and manner pleased Columbiason, who could scarcely help wishing that Madam Columbiana and Liberte, his ward, would add as much self-importance to their dignity.

The King advanced to meet his wife and

daughter, who glanced haughtily at Columbiason, whose piratical attire seemed to afford a subject for their curiosity; for they pointed at it disdainfully and appeared to engage in a discussion as to its non-importance in Pseudo Land. This discussion was soon interrupted, however, by the King, who introduced Columbiason to them as "Knight of the Titular Fleece." This pleased the owner of the title, the meaning of which was unknown to the Queen and Princess, as it doubtless was to the King; and it had the effect of insuring pleasanter relations on the part of the haughty Pseudoine and her daughter, who began to reciprocate the admiration bestowed on them by the Knight, owing, doubtless, to the haughty manner which he, also, began to assume.

It soon became apparent to King Pseudo and his whole court that the Knight of the Titular Fleece was a pretty good fellow, notwithstanding the seeming haughtiness which he tried hard to assume; for, with the permission of His Pseudoic Majesty, he dispatched messengers to the "Title Fiend" for the gorgeous costumes which

he had brought for the occasion, including new crowns for the King and Queen, and a sort of diadem for the Princess.

The messengers had scarcely made their exit when lo! the King and his court suddenly became clothed in garments after the nature of the very ones for which the messengers had been dispatched. This greatly amazed Columbiason and the Admiral, who, from their surprised stare at the grandiloquence of His Majesty's court, must have made their amazement apparent to the King, for he said:

“Thy thought hath again done its work and reflected itself upon King Pseudo and his court!”

Columbiason's attention was so much taken up with the apparent magnificence of the court, and with the knowledge that he had been the cause of the sudden metamorphosis, that he either misunderstood, or did not hear the King's remarks; for he turned to the Admiral, in a pompous and self-important manner, and exclaimed, as he pointed to the King and his court: “See what the Son of Columbia can do, and wonder not that he marvels at his own greatness!”

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Columbiason's attitude had its effect; for immediately, exhibitions of extra haughtiness and self-pride were frequent, both with the King and his court, who began to vie with each other in pomposity, as they examined their own costumes.

It is not recorded whether or not the messengers returned with the original garments for which they had been sent. This, however, could not have deeply interested Columbiason, or his Admiral; for the former took advantage of the absorption of the King's thoughts to suggest to the latter the practicability of a proposal by the Admiral for the hand of Princess "Pseu" in marriage, so as to establish, as he thought, more friendly relations between the two countries. The idea seemed so pleasing to the Admiral that he became enraptured with it and left to Columbiason the task of suggesting the proposition to King Pseudo, as soon as an opportunity should warrant it.

In the mean time, the King and his Court began to feel at home in their new attire, and the Knight of the Titular Fleece began to consider the importance of dis-

closing to His Majesty the real object of his visit to Pseudo Land, and of acquainting him with the great scheme originated by the Knight of the Golden Fleece, and assented to by all the knights, to convey that monarch to the United States.

The King and Queen had taken the throne, the latter on the right of His Majesty, while the Prime Minister, or Orator, as he was better known in Pseudo Land, was standing in front of His Majesty, but down from the platform, or throne-place, as the natives called the throne. At either side of the throne, but in front of it, were the King's guards and courtiers, while nearly in front of the Orator, in semi-circles, were seated Pseudoic maidens, attired in the false-pride garments of mortal-mind conception.

Suddenly, the Orator raised both of his hands and the voices of the court mingled in chorus most harmoniously in words as follows:

"All hail our King Pseudo! Hail, all hail!
All hail his Queen and daughter! Hail, all hail!
The Princess of Pseudoa! Hail, all hail!"

The gem of the great water! Hail, all hail!
Hail! Hail! Hail! All hail, hail!
Hail"———!

After the music had ceased, the maidens, still being seated, commenced a great Pseudo dance, or siva, swaying their bodies and arms sideways, backwards, forwards and around, while continually singing or humming a peculiar tune, yet, withal, harmonious and sweet. They then arose, and, with the same motions of their bodies and arms, to which were added graceful motions of their legs, they danced toward and from the male attendants of the court, who then joined in the humming, and with similar motions of their bodies and limbs, danced to and from the maidens, who became stationary, except the swaying of their bodies and arms in unison with those of the men.

The scene to Columbiason and the Admiral was as entrancing as it was novel, and they were content to remain standing for the privilege of witnessing it.

When the dancing ceased, however, they were not sorry; for they were both equally anxious to get a general idea as to their

possibilities; and Columbiason, following the example set by the Orator, raised both of his hands for the privilege of addressing the King, who nodded his assent.

Columbiason, then bowing low, addressed the King as follows:

"Your Pseudoic Majesty, King of all the Pseudos, I, the Knight of the Titular Fleece, crave permission to see Your Most Royal Highness alone."

"Nay, King Pseudo cannot see your Sir Knightness alone. He never keeps anything from his people!" replied the King.

"Yes; but I *must* see Your Highness alone! Please explain to your people that I want to monopolize Your Majesty, and that a monopoly is never intended for the benefit of the public!" responded the Knight.

"There is no *must* in Pseudo Land. Proceed!" answered the King, somewhat angrily.

Columbiason hesitated for a moment before venturing to publish the scheme of the Knights of the Fleece, but finally, feeling satisfied that the plan was safe among the Pseudos, he began the disclosure thus:

"It seems, Your Highness, that the pulse of my countrymen has been quickened of late because of their failure to receive what they believe to be their share of the gold of the country, and their hearts beat in unison for more."

"Strange people, truly! Think they contentment cometh with gold?" interrupted the King.

"Surely not; yet, however abnormal their desire, think ye not 'twere better to satisfy it, Your Most Royal Highness?" inquired the Titular Knight.

"No money, no devil! Much money, much devil!" replied the King.

"Quite Pseudoic; but my countrymen say, 'No money, much devil;' and they *prove* it, Your Most Royal Highness!" responded the knight.

"How blindly do thy people worship!" exclaimed the King.

"Doubtless, Your Most Royal Highness; but they make others see that the 'gold cure' is the only remedy for their blindness!" replied the knight.

"The root of all our discontent is gold!" retorted the King.

"Thy Pseudological philosophy is of a type the highest, Sire; and I fear that in thy sight, my plan is doomed!" said the Titular Knight.

"Even so, unless thy tact serve thee better than to keep thy mind upon a thing so senseless and devoid of life as gold," replied the King.

Columbiason seemed quite disconsolate for a moment, but finally resolving to run the risk of a hurried disclosure of the dangerous scheme, he exclaimed:

"I represent a monied syndicate,
That has formed a plan which I shall now disclose,
By which I think we soon can extricate
My country from its socialistic foes!
We want your highness to accept much money!"

"Money for *me*?" cried the King, jumping down from the throne and leaping to the side of the Knight of the Titular Fleece, much to the discomfort of both the Orator and the Admiral, who lost their balance and rolled upon the Pseudo floor, only to hear the King say: "Sh! we had better not talk so loud!"

The astonishment of Columbiason was complete at the sudden interruption, but he regained himself when he found the King by his side, and exclaimed: "Thou art as level-headed, or, rather, as devil-headed as most men. Corporation—terrible! Monopoly—awful! Oh, ye pure things! It takes very little of the glittering source of their power to convert you! Sometimes, it first must touch the palm, but often, the simple breathing of its name brings you down from your high throne of purity with a rapidity most astonishing! Thou art content to take the gold, but wilt thou be so free to pay it for a throne?"

"As thou wilt!" replied the King.

"Then," said Columbiason, "'tis the desire of the great Knights of the Fleece that my discontented countrymen shall from thy hands the gold receive which thou shalt thus obtain, and that to thee shall shifted be all the responsibility which now upon themselves devolves; yet the power, which now is theirs, shall still their own remain!"

"'Tis asking much, Sir Knight, to have

me part with gold and power too!" replied the King.

"And thou a Pseudo King!" said Columbiason.

"Aye, but what, then, is left to King Pseudo but a name?" answered the King.

"Have I not replaced thy tattered robes with costumes gorgeous to behold?" exclaimed Columbiason.

"These gaudy robes are but the cast-off garments, often by King Pseudo and his court adorned. Thou hast already seen the same in yonder hall, where, soon, they shall return to wait the Pseudo claim to more, Sir Knight, than thou canst now divine!" responded the King.

"Then tell me, pray, why thou didst leave thy throne and to my side repair for gold?" inquired Columbiason.

"For gold not here. Thou dost forget that this is Pseudo Land, and King Pseudo is but at thine own command! The gold and gorgeous costumes in thy mind to him thou didst impart, and as thou leadest so doth follow His Pseudoic Majesty!" replied the King, bowing.

Columbiason, on hearing the King's re-

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ply, became quite encouraged as to his success as a persuasive orator, and felt that the time was ripe for him to dictate terms to the King. Rising to the occasion, therefore, he expressed himself in terms emphatic, though not a little poetical, as follows:

“Then know that all my corporation friends
shall hold
The very highest titles in the land!
And through taxation must return the gold,
With interest, to the corporation band;
And to Your Royal Highness, King of Pseudoia,
Columbiason Prime Minister shall be—
The greatest man in North America,
Except, of course, Your Royal Majesty!
And the Princess to the Admiral shall be
Married before we start for home,
And when Your Majesty shall cease to live,
I shall assume the sceptre and the throne!”

The King replied:

“Considerate is thy corporation band,
To claim King Pseudo’s daughter and his throne,
In lieu of perishable robes
That lose their lustre in thy native land!
I shall my people bid adieu,

And let the Pseudoine
The Pseudo throne assume!"

King Pseudo then returned to his throne and addressed his people in somewhat poetical feet, which appeared to be the usual method of address on all state occasions in his land. His address is given verbatim, as it has come down to us, and was as follows:

"O'er the Pseudo Ocean is beckoned
Your King from the Pseudo Isles,
Who will leave his Pseudoine, as Second,
To crave your caresses and smiles!
She will henceforth govern your nation,
In place of your King of Pseudoa,
Who now tenders his abdication,
To go to Great America!"

When the King had finished his short though expressive address, the whole court shouted many times: "Hail, King Pseudo!" and rendered the scene more impressive by bowing before His Pseudoic Majesty, in which performance the Admiral and Columbiason joined.

King Pseudo then descended from the

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throne and walked in the direction of the Knight of the Titular Fleece; for the custom of the country forbade its monarchs, after their abdication, to speak from the throne. His Majesty exhibited signs of the emotion which was agitating him, and clearly manifested a desire to give further vent to his pent-up feelings. Turning partly toward the people, and from courtesy, partly toward Columbiason, he therefore further addressed the former as follows:

“The greatest monarch I shall be
That ever sat upon a throne—
A corporate king—Monopoly!
Whose power all the world shall own!”

The people interrupted the King by bowing and shouting, “Hail, King Monopoly! Hail!” in which demonstrations, Columbiason and the Admiral again found themselves joining.

When quiet was restored, the King continued his address, only to be interrupted in a similar manner after each pause. He went on thus:

"It matters not from whence I spring,
North, south, east, west or e'en below!
For that I'm Corporation King,
Assures me power where'er I go!"

"Hail, King Monopoly! Hail!" cried the people.

"Vast tracts of land I shall acquire!
Vast interests shall be controlled
By me, your Corporation Sire,
To fill my pockets with your gold!"

"Hail! Hail!" continued the people.

"The corporate sceptre which I wield
Shall make all nations of the land
In sweet and calm submission yield
To Corporation King's command!"

Before his people could again interrupt the King with their shouts of Hail! etc., his emotion evidently caused him to increase his metre, as he exclaimed:

"Yes, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!
In my very high position,
I shall rule the politician,
The lawyer and physician,
The Interstate Commission,
The poor man and patrician;
While King Whiskey's coalition

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I'll secure without condition;
And the judge's high decision,
And the jury, in addition,
I'll control with marked precision;
And the social ammunition,
Which explodes with least ignition,
And would cause the demolition
Of my very high position,
Shall waive every opposition,
And with the humblest submission,
Yield at once to the volition
Of the Corporation King!"

CHAPTER XXII

THE PRINCESS PSEU

When King Pseudo had finished his address, the people, of whom the son of Columbia and the Admiral of the "Title Fiend" appeared to have considered themselves among the number, went wild, as it were, from shouting "Hail, King Monopoly!" and bowing before His Pseudoic Majesty.

Quiet no sooner reigned again, than Princess Pseu came running and skipping to her father's side, in a state of ecstatic joy, over the beauty of her costume and the brilliancy of the jewels and gems, which, through the courtesy of the Knight of the Titular Fleece, adorned her person. She had not been a witness to the proceedings which were the occasion of King Pseudo's farewell address to his people, and she evidently attributed the outburst of apparent joyfulness on their part to

the same spirit of self-admiration which had kept her from her father's side during these proceedings.

The Princess, in her desire to display her ornaments to her father, seemed to be oblivious of the presence of any one but his Pseudoic Majesty and herself; for, regardless of all rules of propriety, she pulled her dress up nearly to her knees and called her father's attention to her golden shoe-laces; then she directed his attention to the golden lace on her gorgeous dress, the jewels around her neck, the bracelets around her arms and wrists, and the diamonds in her ears, all of which, by her constant motions, gave the appearance of a brilliant pyrotechnical display. She then exclaimed, "I am sure all the men would be glad to marry me!" and skipped off toward the Pseudoine, with a happy "tra, la, la," and made herself no less conspicuous by exhibiting her possessions to that Pseudoic admirer of her attractive daughter.

In the mean time, the beauty of the Princess had become considerably enhanced in the eyes of the Admiral, who

began to evince feelings of admiration for the charming damsel, as well as for himself as a future prince; and he sought an immediate occasion to impress upon the Knight of the Titular Fleece the importance of bringing the question of "quick marriage" to the attention of the King. This Columbiason promised to do without delay; and, true to his promise, he reminded His Majesty that there was one important thing to be done before they set out to cross the great Pseudoic Ocean, on the homeward-bound voyage, and that was the marriage of the Admiral to the King's most royal daughter.

The King showed signs of annoyance at this sudden interference with his paternal pleasure, which he was experiencing through his daughter's self-admiration antics; and he informed the Titular Knight that the Admiral had shown no signs of devotional admiration for the Princess.

Columbiason, somewhat thoughtlessly, replied to His Majesty that the Admiral had not learned the art of loving from the heart.

This reason, for the lack of demonstra-

tion on the Admiral's part, tended rather to enrage than to appease the King, who informed Columbiason that if the Admiral's soul was overflowing with feelings of true emotion, he could scarce suppress the expressions of devotion for the Princess which such feelings would inspire, and that if he experienced no such feelings for his daughter, it would have been better far, had he never seen the King of all the Pseudos.

The King's anger was apparent; for he drew from its scabbard a short sabre as he spoke, and wielded it furiously over his head, much to the embarrassment of the Admiral, who took occasion to remark to himself that he wished he had never known His Royal "Hyena," as he called the King, and that if he ever got home alive, he would become thoroughly patriotic, and never again go abroad for a wife, or for any other thing under the sun; that it looked to him then as though he were even going to have a foreign coffin. He then remarked to the Titular Knight that he did not think he liked the "princess business," and he doubted that he could

generate love enough in his bosom to bind his soul to the House of Pseudo.

Columbiason appeared to be in despair at the sudden stand the Admiral was apparently in the act of taking, and he addressed him thus:

“As Admiral of the ‘Title Fiend,’ thou dost but ill sustain thy claim to rank so high. Canst thou not see that a single thread of love is stronger than a cable-toe of steel? Hadst thou but that single thread, the Princess Pseu is thine, and thou, a prince!”

“Ah,” replied the Admiral, “didst thou not see the sword of his Pseudoic Majesty? Ah, if the Admiral should die before he wed the Princess, who the title owns, what then of love’s single thread, that from his country takes his bones?”

“Think not of death till thou art wed, that thy posterity may boast of thee as chief among their ancestry!” replied the Titular Knight.

“Yon sword and king would make the boasting sooner than we dream, Sir Knight,” responded the Admiral, pointing to King Pseudo. He then cast his eyes

heavenward and expressed his sentiments in a short poetical effusion, something like the following:

"Oh, title, title—ignis fatuus, dream!
Wouldst puff thy victims up with vanity
And make them think that they're the cream
Of all the millions of humanity;
Nor wouldst release thy hold on their conceit
Until thy victory o'er the poor souls is complete!"

The King, in the mean time, had been watching, with suspicion, the antics of the Titular Knight and his admiral, and he twirled his sabre around and around, in a nervous manner, when the Admiral's effusiveness had vented itself, and rushed forward toward him, cutting the air with his sabre, and exclaimed in stentorian tones:

"So thou forgetest how to love, eh?
Watch the King!"

Then, hastening toward the Princess, whose attention had been attracted by the excitement, and who had come to meet him, he fell upon his knees before her, and laying his sabre by his side, clasped his

hands, swayed his body to and fro and fell on his face before her; then partially arising, he rested on one knee, and looking up into the face of the Princess, he exclaimed:

“O title, title—princess of my goal!
My wealth, whatever it may be—
Aye, my country and my very soul—
I willingly renounce for thee!
Be mine! Be mine!”

The Admiral stood, trembling before the Court of the King of all the Pseudos, and listened with apprehension to the protestations of love, which he knew he was expected to follow. In this he was not mistaken; for the King finally sprang to his feet, with his sabre in his hand, and rushing to the Admiral, cried:

“See! That is true Pseudoic love!
Lovest thou my daughter so?”

The Admiral of the “Title Fiend” had no time to lose. He had coveted the title of prince, which he felt he would become on his marriage to the Princess. He had even importuned the Knight of the Titular Fleece to intercede in his behalf. This had been done, and it was too late now for

him to retreat. Without a word in reply to the King, therefore, he threw himself upon his knees before Princess Pseu, but he went through his antics very awkwardly, even failing to throw himself on his face before the titled object of his former adoration; in fact, he seemed to have overlooked even the pleading lesson which His Pseudoic Majesty had given him. This seemed to enrage the King still more; for, seizing the Admiral and throwing him to one side, he fell upon his knees before his daughter and again went through the love-making performance, followed immediately by the Admiral, who, owing to his agitated condition, succeeded little better than before in satisfying the demands of His Pseudoic Majesty, although he went through the poetical proposal in a manner even more emotional than did the King, upon whom he kept his eye for self-protection.

The King was about to again seize the lover, with whom he would doubtless have dealt more severely than before, when Columbiason, who had been watching the proceedings in a spirit of consider-

able agitation, came to the rescue of his Admiral, and, in the language of the court, exclaimed:

“In our country 'tis getting quite rare
For our sons to love their ladies fair;
While our girls, but for station high,
Ere they marry, would pine and die!
He can't understand the peculiar style
That seems to prevail in the Pseudo Isles!”

The King was about ready to reply to the Titular Knight, when the Prime Minister, who also had been watching the proceedings, appeared to appreciate the Admiral's embarrassment; and stepping forward from his place near the throne, he raised his hands, after the custom of the court, whose attention was immediately attracted to him, and exclaimed:

“I'll settle the thing on a solid basis!
Let them begin
Their love-making
While we hide our faces;
And when I am sure
Their love will endure
To a happy lot,
I will tie the knot!”

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This suggestion appeared to meet with the approval of the entire court, and the Prime Minister was encouraged to continue:

“We will hide our faces
Till all the vacant places
In the hearts of these two graces
Shall with true love be filled.”

The whole court, also the King and Queen, as well as Columbiason, then turned themselves completely around, their backs to the lovers; and the Admiral, finding himself unobserved, advanced toward the Princess, whom he addressed thus:

“Madam Princess Pseu!
Had I but beheld thy jewels and costumes,
gorgeous,
Without thy face and form,
How could my love be thine?”

The Princess replied, as she examined her gown and jewels, and glanced at her face in a hand-mirror, which she held before her:

“How can a princess fail to hear
Love’s voice, so sweet
From pure emotion?”

At this juncture of the proceedings, the Prime Minister turned toward the lovers, and peeping through his fingers, exclaimed:

“Their love is brewing!”

This was repeated by the Court, who seemed to feel encouraged at the progress which the wooers were making.

The Admiral then renewed his protestations of love as follows:

“Yet love is fickle when 'tis forced!
Aye, love is only love when pure and undefiled!
Then tell me, Princess, if thy father's sword
Shall the incentive be for love—
Is not its steel more trusty?”

The Princess replied:

“Aye, yet, what a lesson in the sword!
Its steel so true, that, were thy love as pure,
'Twould never flinch from duty, nor be false!”

The Admiral inquired:

“And thinkest thou not a sword of steel can bend
And still its length renew, when so inclined?”

The Princess replied:

“Aye, the *rusty* sword but bends
To test its strength.

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Like the lover true, who never breaks his vow,
It breaketh not, but springs to greater unity!"

The Admiral ejaculated:

"However trusty be thy father's sword
To him and thee,
'Tis false to me,
And would compel
My love to flee
To yonder heights,
Or be as false to thee!"

The Princess cried:

"Oh, cruel, cruel thing!
Let me have my father's sword
Instead of thee!"

On thus expressing her sentiments to her pseudo lover, the Princess shrieked and would have fallen, had not the Admiral caught her in his arms. The King and his court, on hearing the shriek of the Princess, turned their faces toward her, and seeing her in the arms of the Admiral, they appeared to look upon it as convincing proof that the wooing was a success.

The Prime Minister, then addressing the court, exclaimed:

“Let us have the celebration!
Love’s sweet voice has touched the heart!
We have had full demonstration
That the Prince has done his part!
So, come, come, let us away,
While they list to love’s sweet sway;
We’ll clothe them now in bright array
On their happy wedding day!”

The whole court then took up the injunction of the Prime Minister in song, thus:

“Let us have the celebration!
Love’s sweet voice has touched the heart!
We have had full demonstration
That the Prince has done his part!
Away! away! away! away!—away——!”

The King and the Knight of the Titular Fleece then locked arms and took the lead to the great Pseudoic Temple, which stood close to the palace, and were followed by the court and the supposed happy couple, who were soon united in matrimony under the laws of the Pseudoic realm.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE DESPAIR OF LIBERTE

The charming face of the beautiful lake, in the garden of the Columbiason home, nestled close to the edge of the sloping hills, as if to seek repose under their protective care. There was not a vestige of a mark left on the beautiful visage to tell the tale of the terrible conflict which had disturbed her peace. Even the wrinkles which the conflict had caused to distort her pacific features had disappeared; nor was the spear that, for a time, had marred the beauty of her countenance, anywhere visible.

The dear, sweet face of the Queen of Night seemed to bend down, as she rose from behind the hills, and kiss to sleep that aqueous face, once so much disturbed, yet now so calm, and then rise to her throne in the sky, to observe the nocturnal course of nature, as it travelled peacefully beneath her feet.

Just beyond the placid lake, walking slowly and despondently down a pathway which branched from the main boulevard that led to it, might have been seen the form of a maiden, divinely beautiful, and clad in a long, flowing gown of white and red material, with a bodice which seemed to reflect the sky and its starry firmament. On her head was a tiny liberty cap, upon the front of which were tiny stars of precious gems, which glistened in the moonbeam's silvery light like so many brilliants in the coronet of an empress.

No one could mistake this beautiful form, which was none other than that of Liberte, the charming daughter of the Goddess of Liberty, and the ward of the son of Columbia. The solemn tread and thoughtful attitude of this beautiful "Child of the Free" betrayed the state of her mind, as she wended her way toward the quiescent waters of the lake; but, even had they not done so, the observer would not have been obliged to meditate as to the cause of her tardy and hesitating step; for when she reached a slight eminence just above the lake, her pure, sweet

and charming voice, the tones of which the surrounding hills had often before re-echoed, broke upon the quiet ether in most pathetic strains, to words as follows:

“Ah, why this sadness o'er my soul intruding?
Whisperings which I cannot still
Tell me that forebodings ill
Are o'er me brooding;
Oh, peace and gladness from my soul departing,
Ah, leave me not in agony and pain!
Oh, return to me again,
Sweet joy imparting!”

It is seldom that the voice of Liberty remains unanswered; and it was not remarkable, therefore, that the inspiring tones which ushered from the throat of the beautiful daughter of the Goddess, should have caught the ear of one whose admiration for the maiden had ripened into a love little less than worshipful. America had been watching the course of the Goddess of Night, as she rose to greet the stars, that were blinking in harmless flirtations with that cherub-faced nocturnal ruler, when he caught the accents of Liberte's voice. The tones were the sweetest he had ever heard, but they struck

deep into his heart; for there was a sadness in them that only he could really fathom. He saw, in his mind, this beautiful "Child of the Free"—the very acme of all that made his life worth living—and heard her sounding the notes of despair, yet so sweetly and pathetically that he felt he could no longer resist flying to her side and clasping her so firmly in his arms that only death itself would be able to separate them.

As his thoughts pressed thus rapidly upon his heated brain, he forgot the Queen of Night and all her stellar admirers, and indeed, all the earth, with its beauties and attractions, including the charming lake which lay at his feet, and over which his voice had, at least once, blended in sweet unison with that of the object of his love, and leaping like a deer, in the direction from which came the sad pathetic tones, he soon found himself facing the joy of his life—the hope of his existence.

Liberte, her eyes still cast to earth, and with a hope almost forlorn, was unconscious of the presence of her lover until attracted to him by his panting breath;

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then, raising her eyes, she clasped her hands, and in a tone of joyful surprise, exclaimed:

“America! What joy this meeting!”

America was overjoyed to find himself once more by the side of the one whom he so much adored; and grasping her hand, he drew Liberte to his manly breast and replied:

“With rapture, love, my heart is beating,
As in mine arms I clasp thee once again!”

Liberte replied:

“Thine arms must needs be strong;
For Title and Monopoly
May, ere long,
Separate thy Love and thee!”

America responded:

“Nay; no power shall rob me of mine own!
No king, e'er seated on a throne,
Nor all the gold
That corporate king
Can e'er behold
Shall make us twain!”

Liberte, gazing into the eyes of her lover, replied:

"Ah, the power of gold and title, in the hand
Of enemies like the Corporation Band
And title seekers, after fame and caste,
Will bring America, at last,
To bend to them the suppliant knee,
If he would e'er maintain his liberty!"

America cried:

"Nay! heaven forbid such test of my fidelity!
Mine arms shall hold thee firm 'gainst all
Such enmity; nor yield a jot of justice
In thy name, whate'er say title,
Greed or fame!"

Suddenly, the silence of the night was broken by a voice, which rang out upon the air, and from the distant hills returned, in echo, the name "Liberte! Liberte!"

The voice was not new to the daughter of the Goddess. She had heard it many times; for it was the voice of Madam Columbiana—a voice once caressing and endearing, and listened to by the maiden with a feeling that it was well meaning; but there was a menacing tone in it now that made it less welcome to her; for it was antagonistic to the ties that bound

her to America. Clinging closely to her lover, therefore, she exclaimed, in a voice subdued and fearful:

"I hear a voice! It seems as if the very knell of death cries out to Liberty!"

America, hearing but the echo of the voice, replied:

"Nay! from the mountains comes the voice
That cries to thee!
The mountains still bear love for liberty!
There, Liberte, shalt thou fly with me?"

Liberte replied:

"Nay, nay, my pathway seemeth dark!
With all the stars, as well the Queen of Night,
I see no light!
Hark, America, hark!"

The youth, drawing the maiden closer to his side, responded:

"The light of liberty from thy face, so fair,
Will change to light
The black of night!
Liberte, have no fear!"

"Liberte! Liberte!" again came the voice of Madam Columbiana, who, though close upon the lovers, was unaware of her

close proximity to the object of her search, and still less aware that the youth America was at that very time in the act of holding her fair ward in his loving embrace.

Madam Columbiana, although on a searching expedition for her ward, was by no means in an aggressive or threatening mood at this time; for she had received information from her husband that had given her cause for rejoicing, and she was rather meditative than otherwise; hence, as she came upon the lovers, midway of the crest of the hill overlooking the lake, she exclaimed, half to herself and half aloud:

“Yes, from thy Guardian’s hand a letter comes
That bringeth news sublime!
His noble band,
In glittering array,
His native strand,
Without delay,
Shall reach!
And he, Premier,
And I—ha, ha, Premieress
To the King shall be!
Ha! ha! and when the Pseudo King
Shall die, thy Guardian the King!
And I, the Queen! the Queen! the Queen!”

After this semi-incongruous colloquy terminated in the word "Queen," which Madam Columbiana had repeated three times with most exultant vehemence, she crumbled tightly in her hand the letter which she had been reading, and to which she had referred, and almost unconsciously dropped it to the ground and continued to discourse with herself thus:

"The future queen! To think the United States shall be a kingdom great, and I, Premieress to the King! How odd, indeed! And what to do? The King shall tell me, lest, from ignorance, I know not how to act the part!"

Then, glancing up at the moon, she exclaimed:

"And Queen of Night!
Thou shalt divide the honors with thy sister
queen!
How little didst thou think, when first thy pat-
ronizing smile
Upon me beamed, that I to equal fame should
rise with thee!
Aye, Queen Luna, thou mayest well beware,
Lest upon thy sphere nocturnal, I encroach
And make thee jealous of my power,

By night as well as day,
When thou dost sleep!"

Then, lifting her skirt, the Madam strutted backward and forward in the pale moonlight, before America and Liberte, of whose presence she was quite ignorant, and who, happy in each other's arms, yet in despair, were watching the antics of the would-be queen.

By the time Madam Columbiana had completed a few circuits around herself, a small passing cloud partially obscured the face of the moon, thus again attracting her attention to that nightly orb; and pausing in her circumambulations, she again addressed her rival somewhat as follows:

"Hi, Queen of Night! Why hidest thou thy face from Queen Columbiana?

Perhaps thou thinkest inappropriate her dainty strides?

More likely, thou canst not with her compete,
And, therefore, hidest thou thy face
In shame behind thy fan!

Aye, she will show thee *more* thou canst not do,
And make thy face, with envy, turn to green!
See! didst thou e'er behold the *Lunar Queen*
In such a scene?"

After her feelings of disdain for her rival had thus vented themselves, "Queen Columbiana" again lifted her dainty robes and began to dance before America and Liberte, under the seeming radiant smiles of her rival queen, from whose face the obtruding cloud had passed, and who seemed to enjoy the novelty of the scene quite as much as did the sole participant in the festivities.

In the mean time, the attention of Liberte had been attracted from the unusual scene to her lover, who was importuning her to heed his solicitations and fly with him to the mountains, when the moonlight festivities were suddenly interrupted by the appearance of a messenger who informed Madam Columbiana that it was learned from a wireless message that the "Title Fiend" would arrive at early dawn.

The Madam, startled from her ecstatic lunar frolics, raised her head in joyous glee, and assuming an attitude of dignity, pointed upward and replied:

"Go and tell the 'Title Fiend' that Queen Columbiana awaits her crown and ermine!"

Then, turning her head, as if to continue

her declamation to the moon, her eyes fell upon the beautiful face of her ward, Liberte, whom she discovered in the embrace of America, her lover and protector.

The sight of the youth and maiden seemed, much more than the arrival of the messenger, to interfere with the merriment of the guardianess, who drew herself to her full height, and exclaimed:

“Liberte, basking in the misty light
Reflected by the Queen of Night from *me*;
A light, less misty, when it comes direct,
Should suit thee better and reflect
More brilliancy;
For I, Columbiana, Queen to be,
Shall, through my gorgeous court,
O'ershadow her Most Lunar Majesty.”

Having thus addressed herself to Liberte, the Madam lifted her gown and indulged in an ostentatious strut around in a circle; then, returning to the place from which she had started, her vision seemed to have focussed itself on America, to whom her attention had not been previously attracted; and again assuming a stately attitude, she addressed the faithful lover of her otherwise forsaken ward thus:

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"And thou, America!
Thinkest thou that Princess Liberte
Shall in sweet wedlock give her hand to thee?
Nay, nay; thou art but too confiding in thy
youth!
'Twere in vain to cherish hope in mortal truth,
That will but play thee false!
If thou wert but a king, or e'en a prince,
Thy prospect would ne'er be in such suspense;
And in thy brawny arms, thou mightest embrace
In all her winning charms and maiden grace
Our ward Liberte!"

America, drawing his beloved closer to
his bosom, replied:

"My coat-of-arms is Strength; my title, Destiny;
My spear is Truth, not even bent through war
with Falsity!
My shield is Virtue, and my helmet Peace!
My sword is Justice (may it never cease);
My coat-of-mail is Progress; and my name withal
Is a guarantee of equal rights to all!
My beacon-light is from above—
The light so dear to me—
That guides and fills my soul with love;
Her name is Liberte!"

Having thus expressed himself to the

would-be queen, America started, with the object of his devotion, to descend from the hillock overlooking the lake, as if to proceed toward the mountains, when his course was interrupted by Madam Columbiana, who exclaimed:

“Thy words, sweet morsels from thy tongue,
Doth roll effusively!
Didst thou not hear
That the ‘Title Fiend’ is near?
Where is thy boasted power to wield thy sword,
And with virtue’s shield protect thee
From thy lord and master,
King Monopoly!
Ah, title cometh not with sword and shield
To plant his standard
And his foot to hold upon thy soil!
Nay! Nay! He feels his way with gold—
A power not so patriotic
But more potent than thine own!
Nor doth thy name appear upon his roll
Until he hath possession of thy soul!”

Liberte, nestling closer to her lover, replied to her guardianess:

“A power higher—aye, the Power Divine,
Shall guide America in his love, sublime!”

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Madam Columbiana responded:

“Prayer, whatever throne it may assail,
Compared with gold and title, is without avail!”

Liberte replied, earnestly:

“But gold and title ne'er can reach the goal
Of prayer and cause, united in the soul!”

America exclaimed, as he again started in
the direction of the mountains:

“Aye, to the cliffs away we'll steal,
And to the Goddess we'll appeal!”

Madam Columbiana answered in a tone
of command:

“Stay, Liberte! Liberte, stay!”

America answered:

“Nay, nay!
True hearts plighted,
In prayer united,
The Goddess will hear!
Away! Away!”

Then, placing his arm around the waist
of the maiden, the youth, with the idol of
his heart, disappeared from the vision of
the would-be queen, who stood, apparently

stupefied and bewildered at his audacity. Then, coming to herself, she exclaimed: "Go Liberte!" and, pointing to the moon, she continued:

"And thou, Queen Lunar, take thyself to yonder height,
Thus to illume the darkness of the night;
For at the dawn of day,
Columbiana may outshine thy light!"

She then turned toward the palace, to which she wended her way, leaving her rival, Queen Luna, in full sway.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE SUPPLIANT APPEAL

America and Liberte, after leaving the presence of Madam Columbiana, completed their descent to the beautiful lake that lay at the foot of the hill, and after walking toward its narrow end, near the place where the conflict between Columbiason and his shadowy reflection had taken place, they soon gained its opposite side, and found themselves ascending a mountain slope, grand, gorgeous and most picturesque.

The moon had climbed to this, one of the grandest pieces of nature's handiwork, and was reflecting its light upon the charming valley and the distant verdure-covered meadows. The leaping cascades could be heard in the stillness of the night as they made their downward plunge thousands of feet, to mingle with the waters at the base of the mountain and join the rippling

rills on their way to the placid lake. The towers, castles, minarets, terraces and domes formed by the mountain-peaks glistened, from the shining countenance of the Goddess of Night, as she leaped across the frowning precipices and the awful chasms yawning beneath her feet.

When the lovers had reached a slight prominence which overshadowed the lake, Liberte paused and exclaimed: "Ah, must we despair? Is there no hope for Liberte?"

America drew her closer to his side, and replied:

"Say not to hope depart! nor e'er despair!
Nay; to the Goddess we'll repair
And raise, with her, our voice in unity
To Him who ever guides our destiny!"

The two then looked toward the mountains and, in unity, appealed to the Goddess of Liberty in a supplication, as follows:

"O Thou Goddess of Liberty!
Come forth in all thy majesty;
Thy name proclaiming,
Thy power maintaining,
Which now is waning!
Hear, Goddess, hear!"

The sister-spirits of Liberte, who were hidden behind the mountain-peaks, re-echoed "Hear, Goddess, hear!"

This was followed by the united voices of America and Liberte, who exclaimed:

"O, hear our suppliant appeal!
Come forth! O come, thyself reveal!"

"Hear, mother, hear!" exclaimed the sisters of Liberte, in soft and liquid tones.

America, then casting his eyes toward the mountain-peaks, exclaimed:

"Thou, who gavest to my keeping
One who still thy name doth bear,
Fear upon my soul is creeping
Lest mine enemies will tear
From me
My darling Liberte!"

"Hear, mother, hear!" again came from the voices of the hidden sister-spirits; and America, continuing, exclaimed:

"Thou hidden Spirit of the Free!
My soul ascends with thee
To Him whose beacon-light
Shall guide my soul aright!"

"Hear, mother, hear!" came still again from the voices of the sister-spirits.

After this, all was quiet for a moment, save the sound of the falling cataracts; then, suddenly the voice of the Goddess was heard to say:

“America and Liberte,
Thy voice I hear!
Bow down with me
In silent prayer!”

The youth and maiden then knelt together and the Goddess continued:

“O Thou, Most High—Divinity!
Guide, from Thine abundant source,
Liberty’s footsteps on her course
To make thy children free!”

“Hear, Father, hear!” resounded, in the quiet night, the voices of the sister-spirits of Liberte.

The voice of the Goddess, continuing, exclaimed:

“O, under Thy protective care
Preserve, throughout eternity,
The spirit, true, of liberty!
O Father, hear our prayer!”

“Hear, Father, hear!” reiterated the sister-spirits.

The voices then ceased, and all was again quiet, save the distant sound of the falling waters from the mountain-peaks, which the lunar queen had kissed good night, as she descended the rocky stairway toward her bedchamber that was awaiting her arrival beyond the horizon.

The day had yet to dawn, and the night, which had escorted its queen to her chambers, would have left America and Liberte in complete darkness, but for the brilliant illumination emanating from the faces of the Goddess of Liberty and her daughters, Liberte's sister-spirits, all of whom, though hidden behind the grim mountain-peaks, added to the light radiating from the beaming face of Liberte.

America and Liberte then arose from their kneeling position and gazed toward the fading radiation until it disappeared with the Goddess and her other Daughters of Liberty, who were, doubtless, on their way to illumine the pathway of the liberty-loving people of other spheres. They then turned their faces toward the home of the guardians of Liberte, when America, gazing into the face of his betrothed, exclaimed:

"Fair Liberte, shall I say to thee adieu?"

Liberte responded:

"Nay, America, say not to Liberte adieu!
The Power Divine hath heard our prayer!
We meet again at dawn to say 'Good morn'!"

The cherished daughter of the Goddess
then, facing her lover, retreated from him,
and he watched the light of her counte-
nance fade from his view, to leave him, for
a time, in the depths of the gloomy black.

CHAPTER XXV

THE COMING OF THE KING

The God of Day had not yet mounted his diurnal throne, but his crimson hair was dangling loosely from his shoulders over the horizon, which was fiery red from its luxuriance. The dome - like peaks and spires of the mountains and hills caught the reflections of the crimson hue and tossed them one to another in playful glee, as if hastening the sport before the face of the day king should appear in its fulness and interfere with their joyful merriment.

The tops of the trees were greeting with courtesy the morning breeze; little brooks were babbling down the mountain-side, in sweet companionship with their sister-rills, and the cataracts and cascades were playing "hide-and-seek" with one another behind the reflections from the crimson head of His Diurnal Majesty. The birds were chirping and dancing over the dew-covered

meadows, which had not yet felt the glow of warmth from the smile of King Sol, who was awakening nature to welcome him on his morning round.

America, as if oblivious of the awakening of nature, was bowing his head in silent prayer to Him from whom all blessings flow—prayer for wisdom and guidance, in an emergency wrought with forebodings of the greatest evil, which seemed to threaten, not only the separation from him of his dear Liberte—the beautiful “Child of the Sky,” and his lifelong companion—but also, to imperil his very life. When he had bid adieu to the idol of his heart, he returned to sweet communion with the only One who could then relieve the gloom of his solitude—the Giver of all perfect gifts; and he remained in such communion until the dawn of day. He then lifted his head to greet the Day King, when he discerned, high up and beyond the mountain-peaks, a slowly descending object, which he knew well to be the menacer of his happiness.

Soon the Columbiason household was astir, and on the hilltops and in the meadows

were visible various groups of humanity, whose armor shone like burnished gold and silver, and glistened like diamonds in the rays of the rising sun. It was plain to America that the most of these groups were composed of the Knights of the Fleece, and that the distant aerial object was none other than the "Title Fiend," returning from Pseudo Land. In this he was right; for soon the crimson hue of the horizon turned to deepest gray—a cloud had crossed the empyreal brow of the God of Day, and his glad smile had turned to a frown; the chirp of the birds had ceased, and these creatures of the air hung their heads as if in fear of some calamity; nature seemed, for a time, to again close her eyes, as if determined not to become a willing witness to the shattered hopes of America and his beloved fiancé, the fairest daughter of the fairest goddess.

Again America lifted up his voice in silent supplication to the Great King of the Universe and appealed for strength and wisdom in this, his greatest hour of peril. His silent appeal affined with the still voice of *Liberte*, who was held in bond-

age, attired in wedding costume, provided by the Knights of the Fleece, in contemplation of her expected marriage, under duress, to their principal knight.

Madam Columbiana, on the other hand, was in the garden of her palace, attired in her most gorgeous apparel, and surrounded by the most dazzling members of her contemplated court. In her hand she held her crown, ready to place it upon her own head when the proper opportunity should present itself; and her eyes were lifted up, not in prayerful supplication, but in anticipation of beholding the "Title Fiend," which, for a time, had been lost to view in the gloom, and the sight of which was to give hope to her longing desire for titular recognition.

Before the gloomy darkness cleared away, however, the "Title Fiend" had found anchorage in the Columbiason grounds, unknown to America, or even to those who were anxiously awaiting its descent; hence, it was alleged, with no little show of truth, that "Title" and "King Monopoly" had stealthily descended upon the country, which was in

ignorance of their intentions until within their grasp. Indeed, it would almost seem as though Nature herself had contributed to the clandestine anchorage of the "Title Fiend" and to the firm foothold of "King Monopoly," by obscuring the vision of their antagonists; but in reality, it was Title and Monopoly that had shut out the light and subordinated Nature to their machinations.

However, as has been said, it is the duty of the historian to deal with facts; and the fact is, Title and Monopoly, whether clandestinely or otherwise, actually anchored their craft firmly in the native land—aye, in the very garden home of the son of Columbia; and that he contributed to the anchorage of the "Title Fiend" is evident, from the fact that he was virtually in command of that aerial craft. But, to do him justice, it must be said that he did not realize the magnitude of the evil likely to result from such action; on the contrary, he regarded his act as harmless. Then, too, it must be remembered that even the "title craze" with him was due to an outside influence, pseudoistic in its

nature, by which he was led, not only not to oppose titular honors, but to court and seek them, without any consideration as to the evil consequences likely to result from his action.

He began to consider the ancient methods of pomp and display a necessary adjunct to his household, and not only to watch, with the deepest interest, the ostentatious and spectacular demonstrations of kings and princes, but to ape those ceremonies, which he had been taught, in his youth, to regard as mere "tomfoolery," unsubstantial and beneath him, as the son of Columbia. Finally, he began to affiliate with kings, princes and potentates, from whom presents and gifts were accepted as if he were a beggar accepting alms, and were then exhibited to his friends and to the members of his household as a verification of his superiority in being selected as a worthy recipient. Then, the monarchs and their children were invited to his home, in which, of course, there would have been no particular harm; for no person can be blamed for a laudable desire to exhibit, even to kings and princes, the results of his

well-earned efforts; but on the arrival of these "by divine right" dignitaries, a sense of worshipful adoration seemed to take possession of him and of his household, the female members of which sought every conceivable method to ingratiate themselves, with matrimonial intentions, into the good graces of those recipients of Columbiason's bountiful reciprocation for the nice little souvenirs which he had received from them. Indeed, marriages with princes, counts, dukes and what not, by the maidens and widows of the household became of frequent occurrence, and it came to such a pass that no proposal of marriage from a titled foreigner, however impecunious or unworthy he might be, was declined. Upon this, Columbiason and his wife looked with smiles of satisfaction, notwithstanding the fact that domestic infelicity usually caused the giddy females to sue for return to the household, after their savings had been squandered by these wily foreigners.

Concerning the landing of "King Monopoly," Columbiason cannot be wholly blamed for it. His mind had been dwelling

on titular honors, into which condition it had been led at the lake by the emissary of His Pseudoic Majesty. The Knights of the Fleece were all titled—self-created and domestic titles, it is true, but nevertheless, titles—and when Columbiason failed in his efforts to obtain a title from the monarch of the country which claimed his ancestors, it was not unnatural that he should turn for consolation and advice to his domestic acquaintances, the glitter of whose coats-of-mail outshone those of any foreign potentate or prince with whom he had considered it his good fortune to come in contact. Besides, the Knights of the Fleece were the friends of Columbiason, as he supposed, and he felt too much confidence in them to even question the methods by which they gained their wealth and power. When, therefore, after his unavailing efforts, above referred to, they offered him a place in their ranks as "Knight of the Titular Fleece," he accepted the honor, little dreaming that it was merely titular, while the whole control was in the hands of his supposed friends.

After Columbiason had once accepted

proffers from the hands of the Knights of the Fleece, he became their slave. He had "signed the contract!" He was one of them—a member of the board of directors—but they held all the stock and voted it. Titular was his honor indeed, and he gained the reputation of being "in the hands of his friends."

When the anchorage of the "Title Fiend" was secure, the various Knights of the Fleece were promptly notified, and most of them assembled hurriedly at the place of anchorage, to assist in the descent of, to them, the most distinguished passenger of that aerial craft.

A ladder was soon lowered from the craft to terra firma, at the feet of the Knight of the Golden Fleece, who stood, gazing up at Columbiason, who was in the act of descending to earth, when that wily knight saluted him with "Hail, brother Knight of the Titular Fleece!" Columbiason returned the salutation with "Hail, brother Knight of the Golden Fleece!" Then, pausing for a moment, he continued: "Thou hast no doubt, sir, worthy knight, the pockets of the people filled with gold,

in accordance with thy contract, executed with thy brother-knights?"

"Hast thou brought with thee His Pseudoic Majesty?" inquired the Knight of the Golden Fleece, without answering the inquiry of his brother-knight.

"Aye, King Monopoly is here and awaits appellative designation under the baptism of the Knights of the Fleece!" responded a stentorian voice, unrecognized by Columbiason, who turned to see from whence it came. To his amazement, he beheld near him a huge, almost monstrous form, except it was that of a human being. In his hand he held a huge sceptre, representing all the known great industries of the country; this he wielded before Columbiason, as a symbol of his power, then, stepping up to him, he thrust him aside with one hand as easily as if he were a mere baby, and took his place, to listen to what the Knight of the Golden Fleece had to say.

Columbiason, incensed at the audacity of the monster, stepped back and placed his hand on the hilt of his sword, which he partly drew from its scabbard, when he detected something about the monster that

compelled recognition; and, returning his sword to its scabbard, he bowed low before the monster, and exclaimed: "Your Pseudoic Majesty, King Monopoly!"

"Aye, another creation of mortal mind, that grants me power as it will," replied King Pseudo; for the monster was none other than he.

The Knight of the Golden Fleece, then addressing the King, exclaimed:

"King Monopoly! No better appellation couldst thou have! What hast thou monopolized of late?"

"The air of all the spheres within the range of the sun's rays," responded the King.

"King Monopoly requires no more fleecy a baptism! He shall choke all competition by depriving it of breath! Let him descend to earth and assume the kingship of the consolidated interests of the Knights of the Fleece!" exclaimed the Knight of the Golden Fleece.

In the mean time, nearly all of the Knights of the Fleece had assembled to welcome King Monopoly, who descended the ladder leading from the aerial craft,

jumping firmly and securely on the land from the foot-round thereof. Of course, he was greeted most cordially by the Knights of the Fleece, except a few of those knights, who had been detained in the palace, and the Knight of the Titular Fleece, who still remained on the "Title Fiend," watching the proceedings of the hospitable reception of the metamorphosed King Pseudo. He finally shouted to the Knight of the Golden Fleece, "What about the contract, brother-Knight?"

"King Monopoly needs fulfil no contract!" replied the brother-knight.

"But, how about the people's pockets?" inquired Columbiason.

"King Monopoly takes, and gives not!" replied the brother-knight.

"Then will I return His Pseudoic Majesty to Pseudo Land without delay!" cried Columbiason from the deck of the "Title Fiend."

The King then, looking up at his benefactor, replied:

"King Monopoly is here to stay! His Pseudoic Majesty is a pseudonym, good enough for Pseudo Land! King Monopoly

is a reality indeed, whom thou, O Son of Columbia, hast harbored unaware! Thou art his Prime Minister, yet his slave, subject to his control, with permission, of course, of the Knights of the Fleece—the baron knights who, with thine help, hath brought him here!"

Columbiason cried: "Nay! nay! Tis false! I——"

"Beware! Sir Knight Columbiason! 'Tis false' would do in Pseudo Land, where I, a pseudo king, stood well with thee," interrupted the King; "but," he continued, "King Monopoly brooks no criticism! His mission here is known to all the Knights! Beware!"

Columbiason, for the first time, realized that he had been bowing to King Monopoly under other names, and had, through misapprehension, not only harbored him, but had been made a tool of by the Knights of the Fleece to actually give him a foothold in the country, from which it seemed impossible to dislodge him, without also infringing the assumed rights of all the Knights of the Fleece, of whom Columbiason was a brother-knight. He saw plainly that he was in the power of King Monopoly,

and of his masters, the Knights of the Fleece; and, in an agitated frame of mind, he retired to his cabin, and hurriedly changing his apparel, returned to the deck; then, grasping a round of the ladder, he descended from the "Title Fiend," to seek consolation in the arms of Madam Columbiana, who was awaiting his arrival at the palace, attired as if for a coronation feast.

Columbiason, as Knight of the Titular Fleece, and Premier to King Monopoly, was now also attired in most gorgeous costume becoming the dignity of his high office. He was no longer "plain Columbiason"—no longer the "Son of Columbia." He stood before the world rather as the Son of "King Monopoly," in that he was the tool of that high dignitary. In his longing to escape from himself as "plain Columbiason," however, he little dreamed that his wish must be gratified at the expense of his freedom. First, his thoughts were monopolized by "Title" to such an extent that he was ultimately carried by the "Title Fiend" into Pseudo Land—the land of false thoughts and air-castles, and while there, the Knights of the Fleece

were fleecing him of his rights as a true son of Columbia; so that, when he came down from the air, he virtually found himself a captive in the hands of a king whom he had been led to honor—the King of Pseudo Land—the land of falsity. His very title of “Knight of the Titular Fleece” was false, and he was the only knight who could do no fleecing, even had he been disposed to do so.

Had the Knights of the Fleece called themselves “Knights of Monopoly,” Columbiason would have rebelled against uniting with them. The name “Knights of the Fleece” was alluring. It had two meanings—one, the beautiful pure fleece itself, and the other, to fleece. Columbiason regarded the fleece as white as the driven snow, but he found when he returned to earth, or, as it were, to himself, that his brother-knights had been making a specialty of personating that angelic quality in appearance only, and had even fleeced the fleece and used it to dazzle the eyes of the fleeced. Even His Pseudoic Majesty was a tool of these wily knights, who preferred to keep him

under a false name—a pseudo or false king, but finally, their transactions became so daring, and they so obnoxious, that they felt obliged to shift the responsibility to “King Monopoly,” and that figurehead, who continued a tool of the knights, was led to proclaim his own name.

On leaving the “Title Fiend,” Columbiason hurried to his palace, to which he was promptly admitted. He then hastened to the grand reception hall, which, during his absence in Pseudo Land, had been converted into what was called “the throne room,” where he found Madam Columbiana seated on an elaborate throne, which had been specially constructed and fitted up for the new king. She was surrounded by a new set of courtiers, including a few knights of the fleece, who, doubtless, thought it good policy to permit her to temporarily occupy the throne; and she seemed, as never before, to appreciate the dignity of her position. She no longer considered herself plain “Madam Columbiana.” Her actions and manners had changed, and form had become a part of her very existence. When, therefore, Columbiason entered the “throne room,”

which he did unceremoniously, "Her Madamhood" indignantly inquired, "By what authority dare a visitor enter the presence of Columbiana unannounced?"

"Knowest thou not thy Columbiason?" inquired her husband.

"Truly, but that giveth him not the privilege of mortifying Columbiana by intruding himself unannounced!" responded the Madam.

"Even my wife in the hands of the 'Knights of Monopoly!'" said Columbiason to himself; then, bowing low, he exclaimed aloud:

"The force of thy remarks doth impress Columbiason deeply. He shall hereafter even to himself announce himself lest he forget himself; aye, and his very name, as the son of Columbia!" He then made his exit from the "throne room."

Soon after his departure from the presence of his wife, a messenger announced a summons for the knights who were present, to appear before King Monopoly; and Madam Columbiana, accompanied by the few knights who were assembled in her presence, left the room to obey the summons.

CHAPTER XXVI

THE VICTORY

When Columbiason left the throne room, he wandered back into the garden in a dejected frame of mind. He felt that, although he had left the "Title Fiend," he was as much under the influence of title as he was under the control of King Monopoly, both of which were virtually under the control of the Knights of the Fleece, his brothers of the fleecing industry. His gaudy attire made him the centre of attraction, and he felt some consolation in the fact that, although his ambition for foreign title had not been gratified, there was at least a possibility of his achieving honors in his own country equally dignified; and, so long as his brother-knights would not expel him from the order of "Fleecy-Knighthood," he knew that he could do nothing but await his opportunities. That a king and his court were now assured,

there was, he argued to himself, no doubt, and who knew but that he might some day ascend the throne?

As he cast his eyes toward the mountains, near the now celebrated mirror lake, his mind might have been carried back to the source of his original ancestral and titular struggles, had he not discovered, at the foot of the mountains, his ward, Liberte, surrounded by the Knights of the Fleece, headed by King Monopoly, who was gesticulating in a menacing manner, as if to threaten her freedom. Columbiason hastened his steps until he had arrived at the side of his brother-knights, who appeared, by their action, to be urging King Monopoly on to overtures of marriage to the fair ward of their titular brother-knight.

Indeed, Columbiason found that it was a preconceived plan on their part to marry Liberte to King Monopoly, and that her wedding-gown, in which she was attired for the coming great occasion, had been ordered at the suggestion of the Knights of the Fleece. Liberte looked beautiful in the wedding-vestment, but she would

have looked even more beautiful in her own simple gown. Her features, however, betrayed a sadness inexpressible. She seemed to feel her sense of freedom leaving her. She knew well that King Monopoly cared no more for her than she cared for him, and that his only reason for seeking to force her into so unholy a marriage with him was to deprive America of her hand. She determined, therefore, to resist his overtures to the last, come what might.

The Knights of the Fleece must have realized the determination on Liberte's part to offer such resistance; for they were soon in secret consultation with King Monopoly, and it took little to convince Columbiason of a conspiracy to seize her person and compel the bestowal of her hand upon that monarch of their own creation.

In the mean time, Madam Columbiana had made a formal approach to the presence of the body of knights, in a manner more ostentatious than anything of the kind Columbiason had ever before witnessed. She was conveyed in a handsome sedan chair, which was preceded by

a band of music and exquisitely attired "courtiers," and followed by a retinue of attendants as magnificently attired; and there was a display of pomp which must have astounded even King Monopoly himself. Her coming, however, appeared to have prevented the immediate perpetration of the nefarious design of the King and his collusive Knights; for they turned their attention for a time from Liberte to her guardians, whom they observed with interest. They felt that pomp and ceremony were very important adjuncts to the monarchial state into which they were about to enter. It was true the coronation ceremonies had not yet taken place, but the "throne room" was in order, and the throne was constructed for King Monopoly, who had only to be crowned—a mere matter of form.

Madam Columbiana, on arriving at the foot of the mountain, near the King and his knights, was assisted to alight from the sedan chair, and, preceded by half a dozen heralds, and followed by two pages holding her train, she approached King Monopoly, to whom she had the audacity to extend

her hand to be kissed by him. Of course, the King paid no attention to her hand but immediately extended his own hand, which she grasped and kissed with so much fervor that it gave rise to the impression that her hand was extended with the intention of taking King Monopoly's hand for the purpose of kissing it. Be that as it may, King Monopoly evidently felt that he owed her no favors; for he certainly granted none. "Her Madamhood" then extended her hand to Columbiason, who stood close to the King, as his unwilling Premier, and he impressed upon it a kiss of domesticity that brought to the face of his wife a smile of satisfaction; and as the eyes of the conjugal couple met, the two embraced each other upon terms of equality and walked together nearer to the Knights of the Fleece, who soon surrounded them.

In the mean time, Liberte, who had stood trembling before King Monopoly and his titled vampires, gave every indication of utter despair. She knew well that those enemies of America were conspiring to no good purpose, and she had every reason to believe that in the event of their

failure to force her to marry King Monopoly, their ultimate aim was to deprive America of his Liberte, either by killing her or by casting her into prison, in the hope that he would forget her, as her guardians had done, or until her beauty should fade and all hope of her final union with him should perish.

As Liberte, despondent and hopeless, was thus meditating upon her future, America recognized the object of his devotion from his place of prayer. Although she had been brought down by King Monopoly and his "fleecing" knights from her high elevation to the low plain which they occupied, her countenance shone to America as resplendent as when she lifted up her voice with his for succor and support in the time of terrible despair which encompassed their souls. But, from her actions and demeanor, he knew that she was grieving and anxious, and he hastened to her side, where he arrived just as her guardians had passed her by, and as the Knights of the Fleece were engaged in their nefarious designs against her.

Liberte, on again beholding her lover

by her side, threw her arms around his neck and exclaimed:

“America! America!
Truly would monopoly
And the spirit of caste
Manacle thy Liberte
And hold her fast!
In fear and despair
She craves thy care!
America! America! Let them
Not tear from thee
Thy Liberte!”

America, stepping back and taking her hand in his own, replied:

“Liberte! Liberte!
The glorious light divine
Which from thy countenance
Resplendent radiates
In freedom’s cause sublime,
My soul awakes!
Thy cause, dear Liberte,
In lofty purpose pure,
Inspires my heart and soul,
Though hardships I endure,
To make thy cause my goal,
Till thou, indeed, art free!”

When the wily body of King Monopoly’s

supporters surrounded Columbiason and his wife, who had approached them in ostentation and pomp, they did so under the pretense of doing them homage, but, in reality, to prevent their escape from their clutches. No sooner had America finished his reply to Liberte than King Monopoly, followed by the knights surrounding her guardians, approached the lovers, whom the King informed that it was the will and pleasure of the Knights of the Fleece that he, as virtual head of the Republic, take the beautiful Liberte to be his wife; and he took occasion to warn America, whose freedom was already greatly curtailed by the knights, that unless he discontinued his attentions to Liberte, he would seize him and hold him in complete bondage.

When America looked upon King Monopoly and his host of "fleecing" knights, his heart sank within him. He realized their great power and saw no hope of regaining even the freedom of which he had been deprived, much less of retaining the little which that powerful body had seen fit to accord to him; for he felt himself

alone. He beheld, with the deepest chagrin, the guardians of Liberte surrounded by the Knights of the Fleece and, virtually, prisoners in the hands of the king of that great corporate band, which had taken advantage of their shortcomings in idolizing title and gold, to compel their subserviency to King Monopoly, the pseudo-king, who did not disclose his identity until too late for them to save themselves from his clutches, even had they realized that they were within his grasp.

America's love for Liberte, however, had inspired his soul and made him resolve to undertake the greatest effort of his life in her defense.

Under that inspiring resolution, he lost all fear and looked defiantly upon King Monopoly, whose eyes, unable to meet, without blinking, those of one whom that monarch, for the first time, recognized as his antagonist, fell to the ground; and there is no doubt that the heartless King would have retreated, had it not been for his powerful supporters, the equally heartless Knights of the Fleece, who held their sceptres aloft and urged him forward.

America, suspecting nothing more than intrigue, had neglected to arm himself; nor would his arming alone have served him against so formidable a body; he, however, turned his head and cast a loving glance at Liberte, who gave him the faith of a David. The moment he turned his head, King Monopoly sprang toward him, and raising his consolidated sceptre, struck him a blow, which staggered him. He then sprang toward Liberte and again raised his sceptre to strike from her head her liberty-cap, when America, recovering his senses, sprang forward, and grasping from the hand of Liberte a small liberty-pole which she held as an emblem of freedom, thrust it in front of her, saying:

“Hold!
Whate’er thou dost to me,
Strike no blow at Liberty!”

The sceptre came down with force upon the emblem of freedom and fell from the hand of King Monopoly. It was, however, instantly recovered by the Knights of the Fleece and restored to their King, who, aided by those knights, held America in check and seized Liberte, whom they

manacled, intending to lead her away to prison.

King Monopoly then, viewing the knights, exclaimed:

“What a noble set of generals! They would bring any nation to the feet of King Monopoly, by whom even Liberty is now held captive!”

So saying, he grasped with his left hand a chain attached to one of the manacled wrists of Liberte, and striking his breast with his right hand, cried:

“Let the trumpet sound,
And let my subjects know
That King Monopoly has come to stay!
Where is my throne?
Where is my crown?
Make way, I say, for King Monopoly!”

America, beholding Liberte in captivity, struggled with the Knights of the Fleece, who held him captive; and, by a herculean effort, he released himself from their clutches and bounded to her side, followed by King Monopoly.

At that moment, there appeared, just over the head of Liberte, a small cloud,

through which appeared a hand. In the hand was held a sword. King Monopoly struggled to obtain possession of it, for it was the sword of justice; but Liberte, looking up and perceiving it, grasped it and quickly handed it to America, who wielded it defiantly and prepared for an attack on King Monopoly, whom he addressed thus:

"Now, King Monopoly, King Title or whoe'er
thou art—

The name King Pseudo suits thee well,

Because thou art as false as hell—

Thyself defend! Thy time has come to fall!

Ne'er shalt thou hold the rights of all

Again and make them bend to thy infernal
will!"

This sudden stand on the part of America seemed greatly to amuse the Knights of the Fleece, who laughed quite heartily at his apparent audacity; but America had relegated all fear to oblivion. He held in his hand the sword of justice, in which his confidence had not been shaken; and, attacking King Monopoly, he used it effectually upon the consolidated sceptre, which fell from the King's hand. This seemed to enrage the King, who cried:



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"It is now America or King Monopoly!" and drawing his sword, he sprang forward and, with his mighty arm, wielded it in a fierce attack upon his antagonist, encouraged by the Knights of the Fleece, who shouted "Bravo!" and clapped their hands as they looked on.

America defended himself bravely for a time, but was gradually forced backward by King Monopoly, much to the renewed delight of the Knights of the Fleece. Watching his opportunity, however, he soon became again the aggressor, and the struggle grew fierce and terrible. America was fighting for his *Liberte*, the very glance from whose eyes inspired him to greater effort; and the great King Monopoly, with all his strength, finally began to show signs of fatigue as if he had taken on too much corpulence to longer wield, with ease, the sword of monopoly against the sword of justice.

America, in the mean time, followed up his advantage, and dealing King Monopoly a heavy blow with his sword, felled him to earth; then, springing upon him, he placed his foot on his neck, and, wielding the

sword of justice on high, was about to sever his head from his body, when, to the consternation of Liberte and of her guardians, the Knights of the Fleece drew their swords, and springing forward, caught on their weapons the descending blow. Then, like tigers, they sprang upon America, who, for a time, defended himself as bravely as before, but the concerted power of so many supporters of King Monopoly and Title told heavily upon him. He managed still to hold firmly the sword of justice, but was prevented from wielding it aggressively, and he was beginning to despair and to lose hope. He was falling back toward the mountains, followed closely by the Knights of the Fleece, whose fresh vigor contributed to their never-ceasing determination to control the situation and settle, once and for all, the question of superiority.

Liberte had fallen upon her knees, and, with uplifted hands, from which the restraining chains were dangling, was once more silently appealing for aid, while the terrible clash of steel resounded in her ears.

Suddenly, a light, more brilliant than

DROPPING THEIR SWORDS THEY REELED AND FELL UPON THEIR FACES.



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any that had ever before been seen, appeared in the mountains. So dazzling was its illumination, that the eyes of the Knights of the Fleece could not resist its effects upon them; for it was from the countenances of the Goddess of Liberty and her daughters, the sister-spirits of Liberte, all of whom appeared so suddenly in the mountains before the Knights of the Fleece that it staggered them, and dropping their swords, they reeled and fell upon their faces.

In the mean time, Columbiason and Columbiana hung their heads, as if in shame, and Columbiason fell upon his knees before the Goddess with uplifted hands, as if to plead for mercy. The Goddess beheld him for a moment, and then exclaimed:

“Son of Columbia, arise!
Unmask! Cast off thy gaudy title-robes
And show thyself Columbia’s son indeed!
What title-robe, though royal it may be,
Compares with freedom’s precious shield
That clothes the soul of Liberty?
What foreign title, be it e’er so high,
And by the hand of prince or king bestowed,
Can overpoise, on freedom’s scale,

396 HIS PSEUDOIC MAJESTY

The precious name 'America'
Friend of America, arise,
And in his name the sword of freedom wield!
May liberty e'er be thy guiding star;
America, thy watchword evermore!"

As Columbiason arose his gaudy robes fell from him, leaving him attired in the garb of an American citizen, while Columbiana gathered her robes around her in such a way that only the red, white and blue colors were conspicuous, the colors of other nations having vanished from view.

The Goddess then turned to America and Liberte, and exclaimed:

"And now, America, behold thy bride—
My fairest, brightest daughter, Liberte!
Take her! She is thine forevermore,
Confided henceforth to thy watchful care!"

At that instant the manacles fell from the wrists of Liberte, who, with America, arose. They then embraced each other, while the fair sisters of Liberte joined in singing:

"Rejoice! Rejoice! Proclaim in loudest tone,
America and Liberty are one!
Rejoice! Rejoice!"

The brilliant light then died away, but its soft reflection evermore enveloped the son of Columbia and his charming help-meet, who found their struggles and tribulations at an end. The vision of the beautiful child of the sky became evermore vivid in their memories, and their love for America and his beautiful bride grew daily more and more devoted. Never again was the horrid spirit of caste, which was represented by the ancient ancestor and the pseudo-king, permitted to take possession of their souls. They no longer saw God through the "almighty dollar"; they now beheld him through His own image and likeness; and the worshipful adoration of gold, of which King Monopoly was the highest exemplification, was found, like the spirit of caste, to be as unreal and powerless before America and Liberte as was the ancient knight's reflection on the lake to the guardian of the most beautiful daughter of the Goddess of Liberty.



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